



YORKSHIRE WOLDS TEACHER TRAINING

Complaints Policy

Version 3.2

<p>Important: This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the Trust website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online.</p> <p>Name and Title of Author:</p>	<p>Alison Fletcher Director of YWTT</p>
<p>Name of Responsible Committee/Individual:</p>	<p>YWTT Executive Board</p>
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Policy Statement

Our **vision** is to develop the next generation of great teachers, ethical school leaders and advocates for the teaching profession who will ensure our schools and young people thrive.

Our **core purpose** is simply to develop great new teachers. We do this by exemplifying excellent practice and through observation, mentoring, coaching, practice, reflection and sharing with peers. We will equip our trainees with a wide range of teaching and learning strategies, support them to motivate, and inspire young people.

Yorkshire Wolds Teacher Training is committed to developing its trainees into excellent teachers through a creative, effective and rigorous programme underpinned by supportive and highly experienced teacher educators. Our aim is to create models of outstanding practice across the partnership and to meet the needs of our partner institutions as well as training the school leaders of the future.

1. Purpose and Scope

YWTT takes any form of concern or complaint very seriously and endeavours to resolve concerns and complaints informally, swiftly and discreetly wherever possible. However, formal complaints are managed via the formal complaints processes detailed within this procedure. Formal procedures will be followed when initial attempts to resolve an issue are unsuccessful and the complainant remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

The aim of this policy and procedure is to:

- Encourage resolution of concerns/complaints informally wherever possible
- Be easily accessible and publicised via the YWTT website
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Allow swift handling with established time frames for action, ensuring complainants are informed of progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation is undertaken by an independent person where necessary
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality, sharing information on a need to know basis discreetly, respectfully and professionally
- Address all points raised and provide an effective response and appropriate redress where necessary
- Provide information to YWTT leadership team, and the YWTT Executive Board to enable YWTT to continually learn, develop and improve

This policy applies to all trainee teachers enrolled with YWTT. The scope of the policy covers most complaints that YWTT is likely to receive. This includes for example

- Complaints about YWTT personnel
- Complaints about placement schools
- Issues with YWTT programmes
- Health and Safety issues within the working environment

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The **YWTT Executive Board** is responsible for ensuring this policy is applied fairly and consistently across the organisation.

The **Director of YWTT** is responsible for ensuring trainees are treated fairly and consistently across the organisation. They will ensure that this policy is implemented fairly and consistently, whilst also ensuring that the relevant employment legislation and statutory guidance is

adhered to. The Director of YWTT will ensure trainee teacher complaints are dealt with fairly and consistently in line with this policy

3. Equality and Diversity

YWTT is committed to:

- Promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines, adhering to current legislation e.g. the Equality Act 2010.
- Delivering high quality teacher training that meets the diverse needs of its trainee population, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged.

4. Complaints Procedure

Concerns are best dealt with as they arise and YWTT will endeavour to resolve issues informally wherever possible. However, when initial attempts to resolve the issue informally are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further, formal procedures will be invoked. There are three stages to YWTT's Complaints Procedure:

- Stage 1: Complaint Form submitted to the YWTT Administrator who will assign a member of YWTT SLT to investigate.
- Stage 2: Complaint Form submitted to the YWTT Administrator who will arrange for it to be reviewed by the Director of YWTT / another member of YWTT SLT
- Stage 3: Complaint Form Submitted to the YWTT Administrator. Complaint will be considered by the Chair of the YWTT Executive Board

Complaints against the Director of YWTT will normally be dealt with by the Chair of YWTT Executive Board.

When investigating complaints, staff investigating will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and assess what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them
- Clarify what the complainant would view to be a satisfactory resolution
- Interview those involved in the matter, allowing them to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague if they wish to access such support
- Conduct interviews fairly, sensitively and objectively
- Keep notes of the interview or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting

At each stage the person dealing with the complaint will seek ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily. It may be appropriate to consider:

- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part and/or acknowledgement that the situation could have been handled different or better. (This is not the same as an admission of negligence)
- An apology
- An explanation
- An assurance and explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking to review YWTT procedures in light of the complaint

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident. We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the next school day.

Any outcomes will be logged in the complaints log for monitoring purposes and retained in accordance with the YWTT Data Protection policy.

Stage 1 - Complaint Submitted for investigation by YWTT Leadership Team

The trainee teacher may be dissatisfied with the way the concern was handled or the outcome and they may decide to pursue their complaint. The trainee teacher should seek a more formal review of their complaint completing a complaint form and submitting their complaint to the YWTT Administrator.

The YWTT Administrator will assign a member of the YWTT Leadership Team to investigate the complaint. When they have enough information to enable them to make a decision they will share their decision with the complainant verbally wherever possible and confirm the outcome in writing to the complainant, ensuring the outcome is also logged on the complaints log.

The investigating officer may be able to resolve the matter following their investigation, establishing the facts and explaining those to the complainant. There may be a number of possible outcomes following receipt of a complaint and a subsequent investigation, including finding no evidence to substantiate the complaint and therefore no further action, an internal resolution and potentially an apology. The investigator of the complaint may feel it appropriate to apologise to the complainant on behalf of YWTT (recognising that an apology and/or an admission that YWTT could have handled a situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence). The complainant should be assured that steps will be taken to ensure the situation does not happen again and an appropriate way forward should be shared with the complainant verbally where possible and followed up in writing. The outcome should be logged on the complaints log.

It is anticipated that stage 1 of the procedure should be completed within two working weeks of receipt of the initial complaint. Where a delay occurs or is likely to occur, YWTT will contact the complainant explaining the reasons for the delay and providing the complainant with an anticipated timeframe for resolution

Stage 2 – Complaint Reviewed by Director of YWTT

If the complainant is not satisfied with the stage 1 response the complainant can submit a review under Stage 2 of this procedure to the Director of YWTT within 5 working days of the date of the letter they have received detailing the stage 1 outcome. The Director of YWTT will look at the previous correspondence and may arrange to meet with the complainant or they may appoint someone to undertake further investigations. When they have enough information to enable them to make a decision they will share their decision with the complainant, verbally wherever possible, and confirm the outcome in writing to the complainant, ensuring the outcome is also logged on the complaints log.

It is anticipated that the stage 2 of the procedure should be completed within two working weeks of receipt of the review form. Where a delay occurs or is likely to occur, the school will contact the complainant explaining the reasons for the delay and providing the complainant with an anticipated timeframe for resolution.

Stage 3 – Appeal

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome they can submit an appeal to the YWTT Administrator within five working days of the date of the letter they have received detailing the stage 2 outcome. The YWTT Administrator will arrange for the Chair of the YWTT Executive board to consider the complaint. Stage 3 is the last stage of the YWTT's Complaints Procedure and allows for an independent, impartial review of the case. The aim of the appeal hearing is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between YWTT and the complainant. The Chair of the YWTT Executive board will review the evidence and previous outcomes and can:

- Dismiss the complaint in full or in part
- Uphold the complaint in full or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the Trust or school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The Chair of the YWTT Executive board will establish findings and recommendations in relation to the complaint and these will be confirmed in writing to the complainant, the Director of YWTT and, where appropriate, the person the complaint is lodged against.

Records of complaints, concerns and compliments will be retained, alongside associated actions where a concern or complaint has been investigated and resolved. The principles of GDPR will be adhered to.

5. Office of The Independent Adjudicator

If a complaint has exhausted YWTT's Complaints Procedure and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to refer their complaint to the OIA. The complainant will have received a Completion of Procedures Letter, which will detail the issues that have been considered, YWTT's final decision and the deadline for bringing a complaint to the OIA. Further information can be obtained at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

6. Serial and Persistent Complainants

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the YWTT complaints procedure
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- Knowingly provides false information
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation goes on
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value

7. Steps we will take

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns, and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact YWTT in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as Citizens Advice
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary
- Stopping responding

We may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
- We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience
- Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.
- In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our site.

8. Duplicate complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and the local process is complete
- Direct them to the OIA if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint
- If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

9. Monitoring of compliance with and effectiveness of the policy and procedure

The YWTT Executive Board will review a summary of complaints annually to ensure learning is shared within YWTT and across the partnership as appropriate.

10. Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed within 2 years of the implementation date.

Complaints Submission Form.

Please complete and return to the YWTT Administrator.

Your name:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Email:

Preferred method of contact:

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official Use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: