BLÁTHÚ

Steiner Early Childhood Association CLG

Croilár, Mountshannon, Co. Clare

**COMPLAINTS POLICY**

**Purpose of the Policy**

Bláthú Steiner Early Childhood Association views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person, member service or organisation that has made the complaint.

**Our policy aims to**:

• To outline a clear and easy procedure for anyone wishing to make a complaint and/or provide feedback to Bláthú.

• To publicise the complaints procedure on our website so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint

• To empower everyone at Bláthú to handle complaints appropriately so that every attempt is made to optimize a satisfactory outcome.

• To ensure all complaints are investigated in a fair, transparent and timely way.

• To ensure all complaints are, where possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired

• To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

**Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

**Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the CEO and the Board of Directors.

**Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

Written complaints may be sent to:

Donna Ní Bhaoill, Croílár, Mountshannon, Co. Clare V94 DX9X

or by e-mail at blathuceo@gmail.com.

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to (083)1983249.

**What to do if you have a complaint or feedback**

Complaints may arrive through the contact details provided in this policy or through any other contact details the complainant may have.

All complaints need to be recorded. The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

• Take a written account of the complaint

• Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number

• Note down the relationship of the complainant to Bláthú

• Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure

• Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take

• Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant’s own words.

**Resolving Complaints**

**Stage One**

* A complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.
* Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the CEO. On receiving the complaint, the CEO records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved she can investigate it and take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
* Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.
* Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

**Stage Two**

* If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Board of Directors. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board of Directors for further review. This will be made known to the complainant and informed of when to expect a reply.
* If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board of Directors decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

**External Stage**

The complainant can complain to the Charity regulator at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints and concerns the Charity regulator can involve itself in can be found on their website at: [Raise a Concern Charities Regulator](https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/en/information-for-the-public/raise-a-concern)

**Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Board of Directors may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

**Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

**Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints**

 • Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation

• Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words

• Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry

• Show an interest in what is being said

• Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details

• Ask for clarification wherever necessary

• Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down

• Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable)

• If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise

• Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue

• Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.

• Don’t promise things you can’t deliver

• Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met

• Make sure that the person understands what they have been told

• Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal

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| NAME: |  |
| SIGNATURE |  |
| POSITION |  |
| DATE: |  |