



## **Haven Wood Complaints Policy.**

The directors of Haven Wood have adopted the following policy to deal with formal complaints from students using the centre, members of the community, other organisations, or general public.

**First and foremost, complainants have the right to raise a complaint directly with Ofsted at any point during a complaint process, including from the outset.**

### ***Dealing with concerns at the earliest opportunity***

If parents, students or members of the public have concerns they should first discuss their concerns with the member of staff most directly involved. We expect most concerns will be resolved in this way (and not recorded as a formal complaint).

However, if not the following formal procedure will be followed:

2. Discuss their concerns with the activity Leaders. This is Stage 1 of the formal process. At each stage in the procedure, we will want to keep in mind ways in which a concern or complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the concern or complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an appropriate apology.
- an explanation.
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur.
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again.
- a commitment to review policies and activities in light of the complaint.

Complainants should be encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that Haven Wood could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence. Equally, it is appropriate to identify areas of agreement. It is also of importance to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

Stage 2: Only where all these avenues have been tried and found unsatisfactory should the complainant take a complaint to the centre manager (Mr Ray Newberry) as a more formal process.

Principles informing our complaints procedure:

This procedure is designed to:

- be well publicised and easily accessible
- be simple to understand and use
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- allow a mediation process if agreed by the complainant
- allow for a hearing with the owners, where appropriate
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible
- address all points of issue, provide an effective response and appropriate redress where necessary
- provide information so that our services can be improved.
- Ensure a full and fair investigation.

### **Making a Complaint to Haven Wood owners – Haven Wood Forest School Bushcraft and Wilderness Therapies Ltd.**

Stage 3: Where other attempts have been unsuccessful in resolving a complaint, the complainant should write to the Owners at

*Haven Wood Ltd,  
Barn Park Lodge,  
Stibb,  
Nr Kilkhampton,  
Cornwall.  
EX239HP.*

The envelope should be marked 'FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION', 'PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL' and staff Haven Wood will ensure that the letter is forwarded without delay. On receipt of the complaint the owners will:

- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary).
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
- At this point the owners will decide whether a mediation stage should be offered. Mediation can only proceed if the complainant is willing for it to be tried. If mediation is not successful, the complaint will be considered by the owners.

## **Mediation**

Mediation can be a good way to resolve a complaint because:

- It gives both complainant and Haven Wood another opportunity to hear each other's points of view (with a third party facilitating).
- It gives the third party an opportunity to help Haven Wood and complainants identify and build on areas of agreement.
- It gives Haven Wood and complainant a structure within which they can resolve remaining differences.

### **The third formal stage.**

- If both complainant and Haven Wood emerge from the mediation satisfied, that is the best foundation for a continuing positive relationship between them.
- Even if the complaint continues according to Stage 3, to the owners, the issues to be considered are likely to be much clearer following the mediation.
- Mediation may elicit one or more of the responses listed below from either party:
  - an acknowledgment that the complaint is valid in whole or in part.
  - an appropriate apology.
  - an explanation.
  - an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
  - an assurance that the event complained of will not recur.
  - an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again.
  - an acceptance that the complaint needs go no further
  - a commitment to review centre policies in light of the complaint.

Where the complainant is still not satisfied that their complaint has been dealt with fully and properly, they may choose to take it to the owners. No further information about the complaint should be shared with other parties.

- A. It is important that the complaint hearing is impartial and that it is seen to be so.
- B. The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Haven Wood and the complainant
- C. James Tonks will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone, and care is needed to ensure the setting is not intimidating and not adversarial.

The owners can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint

- recommend changes to Haven Wood systems or procedures to ensure problems of a similar nature do not recur.

It may:

- Consider and, if appropriate, criticise the way in which an operational decision was communicated.
- Consider the manner in which a complaint about any decision was addressed
- Consider and, if appropriate, identify limitations in a policy or procedures
- Consider whether it should recommend Haven Wood offer appropriate redress.
- The complainant will be invited to explain the complaint,
- Haven Wood may question elements of the complainant
- Haven Wood may explain their actions
- The complainant may question the Haven Wood owners
- The complainant can opt to sum up their complaint.
- Haven Wood owners may then sum up their actions and response to the complaint.
- Haven Wood owners may opt to consider the matters and respond within five working days.