



COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Policy Context

The Complaints Policy in relation to Ógras' Services sets out the procedures for both making and dealing with complaints about any aspect of the service.

The goals of this policy are to ensure that:

- Anyone who comes into contact with the service will be assured that if they ever have a comment to make or need to make a complaint it will be welcomed and responded to appropriately.
- Parents or guardians are informed about the Complaints Policy and Procedures when registering for a club/camp
- All staff members are aware that if they receive a complaint there is a clear and specific procedure in place to deal with it in a confidential manner.
- Complaints are taken seriously, resolved efficiently and effectively, and recorded appropriately.

2. Policy Statement

Ógras is committed to providing a quality service to Children/Young People and their parents/guardians and we regularly evaluate our services in order to ensure this and to monitor the standard of our performance.

While this is always our aim, we accept that sometimes things do not always go to plan. In such circumstances, we want to know, so that we can put things right and learn from our mistakes.

We welcome all comments on our services, positive or negative. Complaints will be accepted and investigated irrespective of the nature of the complaint or who the person making the complaint is.

Ógras gives a commitment to resolve complaints as quickly as possible. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, sensitively and appropriately to ensure that the standard of service provided by Ógras is maintained at a high level. The quality of the service provided to any child/young person will never be adversely affected because a complaint has been made.

The complaints procedure is kept as simple as possible. Anyone making a complaint will be supported through the process as needed and given a copy of the 'Complaints Policy and Procedures'. The complaints policy and procedures are available on our website www.ogras.ie

When a complaint is received management will be informed immediately. Every effort will be made to address the issue informally before moving to a formal procedure.

If necessary the complaint will be fully and appropriately investigated. A written acknowledgment of receipt of the complaint will usually be sent within 3 working days and a response within 20 days.

Where a complaint concerns a member of staff, we will address the situation with due regard to our obligations as an employer and the rights of the employees, the terms governing their conditions of employment and the procedures outlined in the staff handbook.

If a complaint is made against the Manager, a representative of the management committee (usually the chairperson) will conduct an investigation and ensure appropriate management and recording of the complaint.

In the event of errors being made, Ógras will endeavour to correct them as quickly as possible and to give an explanation and, where appropriate, an apology.

All complaints made – both formal and informal – will be recorded in detail. Records will be stored in the Head Office and will be retained for at least two years following resolution of the complaint as required by regulation.

All information relating to any complaint will be treated as confidential and shared only on a need to know basis. In the case of a Child Protection matter Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána will be contacted. All records of complaints will be kept in full compliance with the Children First Act 2015, Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2014. The Complaints Records File will be available to those authorised to inspect it.

The evaluation of the outcome of the complaint will form part of the considerations for future policy and practice and risk management procedures.

3. Procedures & Practices

How a complaint is received

Ógras is committed to open and regular communication with parents/guardians. We welcome all comments on our services, whether they are positive or negative.

Complaints will be accepted irrespective of the nature of the complaint or who the person making the complaint is.

How to make a complaint

A complaint can come to the attention of the service in a number of different ways:

- Contact, by phone or in person, with a staff member or by letter, email, and/or text.
- The complaint may be made by the person directly affected or by a person acting on their behalf.

To whom a complaint can be made

If a person has a complaint about some aspect of the service's activity, or about the conduct of an individual member of staff or volunteer, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking to the individual concerned.

Some complaints may fall more into the category of disagreements or differences of opinion, and may be resolved through discussion and compromise on the part of both the person making the complaint and the staff member concerned.

Any complaints not within the scope of the service to investigate, will be referred appropriately. For example:

- If the Stiúirthóir has good reason to believe that the situation has Child Protection implications, they must ensure that the Tusla Duty Social Worker is contacted, according to the procedure set out in the Child Protection Policy.
- If any person involved in the complaint has good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed they should contact An Garda Síochána.
- Where a complaint relates to Health and Safety it may be appropriate to notify the Health and Safety Authority.

How a complaint will be managed

Stage One:

In the first instance, those who wish to make a complaint are encouraged to speak directly to the relevant member of staff or volunteer. If they do not want to do this, they can speak with Maedhbh Ní Dhónaill, Stiúirthóir Ógras, who will try to resolve the problem.

The details of the complaint and the response will be recorded by the Stiúrthóir.

If the Stiúrthóir has a direct or indirect involvement in the matter being complained of, the complaint will be passed to the Chairperson.

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, then Stage Two of the procedure will formally come into operation.

Stage Two:

If informal discussions of a complaint or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, those making the complaint should be encouraged to put their complaint in writing to the Stiúrthóir using the form attached to this policy. All necessary support will be provided. Relevant names, dates and any other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included.

The Stiúrthóir will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing as soon as possible – usually within 3 working days – and investigate the matter within 20 working days. If there is any delay, those who made the complaint will be advised of this and offered an explanation. The Stiúrthóir will be responsible for sending them a full and formal written response to their complaint.

The Stiúrthóir, with the assistance of appropriate staff members, will carry out a full investigation. This may involve:

- Interviews with all relevant individuals
- Minute taking of all meetings
- Individuals being informed that they may have an appropriate individual present with them during the investigation.

The Stiúrthóir will also inform the Chairperson that the investigation is taking place.

Where no grounds for the complaint are found, the person making the complaint will be notified and information detailing the next stage will be provided.

Where the Stiúrthóir (or other appropriate person) investigating, finds grounds for the complaint, they will ensure that all of the required details are available from the person making the complaint (using the Complaints Form, see Appendix A).

Staff members / Volunteers must participate and support the investigation of any complaint, where requested. Any staff member or Volunteer involved in the complaint will be supported throughout the process.

Stage Three:

- (i) If, at the conclusion of the above process, those who made a complaint are dissatisfied with the response they have received, the original complaint along with the organisation's response will be passed to the chairperson of Ógras who will continue with the complaints process.

- (ii) The Board's Chairperson will communicate a detailed response, including any actions to be taken, to both the Stiúrthóir and the person who made the complaint, within 28 working days.

Stage 4:

- (iii) If, at the conclusion of the above process, those who made a complaint are still dissatisfied with the response they have received, the original complaint along with the Chairperson's response will be passed to the Board of Directors who will ensure that there is a complete review of the complaint.
- (iv) The Board's Chairperson will communicate a detailed response, including any actions to be taken, to both the Stiúrthóir and the person who made the complaint, as soon as possible.

Communication of the Response/Outcome

The formal response to the complaint will be sent from Ógras to the person who made the complaint and copied to all relevant members of staff if appropriate. The response will include recommendations for dealing with the complaint and any necessary amendments to the service's policies and/or procedures and/or risk management procedures, arising from the investigation.

Recording of Complaints and Confidentiality

Records of complaints must be kept in the Head Office, separate from club files. All information relating to complaints is to be shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Where a complaint involves a child protection concern the Child Protection Policy will apply.

Where a complaint involves an allegation of a breach of a person's rights (child or adult) and/or a criminal action or behaviour the appropriate authorities must be informed.

The record of the complaint must be kept for at least two years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with. *[This period may vary depending on other legal requirements.]*

The record is to include:

- The name of the complainant
- The nature and details of the complaint
- The date and time the complaint was received
- The manner in which the complaint was received
- The name of the person who received the complaint
- The level of risk to the child or children arising from the subject of the complaint
- The manner in which the complaint was dealt with, including:
 - Any local resolution implemented

- Any specific meetings held with the person making the complaint and minutes of any such meetings
- Timelines for investigation of the complaint and notification of the outcome to the person making the complaint
- Details of the investigation carried out
- The outcome of the investigation
- Details of any corrective or preventive actions to resolve the complaint
- Information given to the person making the complaint about the progress and the outcome of the complaint
- Details of the investigation and whether the action taken to resolve the complaint was accepted
- Details of any plan implemented for the child's care as a result of the complaint as agreed with the child's parents/guardians
- Details of any review to the risk management process in light of the complaint.
- Details of any changes to practice or policy.

All records of complaints must be kept in full compliance with the Children First Act 2015, Child Care Act 1991, Freedom of Information Act 2014.

Only members of staff authorised by the Stiúrthóir can access the Complaints Records File.

4. Communication Plan [For staff & families]

All parents/guardians are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Comments and Complaints on enrolment. Staff members will check with parents/guardians that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

This policy will also be reviewed with staff at induction and annual staff training. When a complaint is received, the person making the complaint will be given a copy of this Policy and Procedures.

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents/guardians and the staff team will receive written notification of any updates.

5. Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- **Staff Training Policy**
- Confidentiality/Information Sharing Policy??
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Comments and Complaints Form (*see sample form attached*)

6. Contact Information

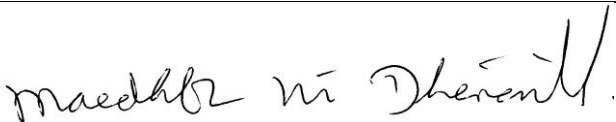

If you need more information about this policy, contact:

Name	Maedhbh Ní Dhónaill
Phone number or email	086 6018520 maedhbh@ogras.ie

7. Policy Created

Date this policy was created	19 October 2021
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8. Signatures

	Name and position	Signature
Approved by	Maedhbh Ní Dhónaill Stiúrthóir Ógras	
Approved by	Anita Nic Amhlaoidh Cathaoirleach	

9. Review Date

Date this policy will be reviewed	19 October 2024
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10. Responsible for implementing the Policy

The Bord of Directors and Ógras management have responsible for implementing the policy.
