



# HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION

## CLOSEBURN HOUSE AND MABEN HOUSE SCHOOL

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



#### COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

Holistic Childcare and Education is committed to ensuring that its services are of the highest quality. We welcome feedback from all stakeholders in order that we can improve where necessary or recognise and learn from positive or outstanding experiences. A formal complaints procedure enables Holistic Childcare and Education to respond clearly and properly to complaints and to know when and why people are not satisfied with its services, so that it can improve them. It is important to note that our Compliments and Complaints policy statement is separate to our internal human resources suite of policies and procedures in respect to Comments and Complaints for employees and young people in our care.

#### **PROVIDING POSITIVE FEEDBACK**

Positive feedback about our services and staff is welcomed. If you wish to provide positive feedback, you can email:

**[office@closeburnhouse.co.uk](mailto:office@closeburnhouse.co.uk)**

**[office@mabehouse.co.uk](mailto:office@mabehouse.co.uk)**

We will pass your positive feedback on to relevant staff and management, and ensure that the Directors/Head of Education are also made aware of your feedback. You can also contact the Care Inspectorate or Education Scotland to provide positive feedback on any of our services (see Section below for contact details).

#### **WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, either written or spoken. A complaint can be made by an individual or a group. You may wish to complain if you are not satisfied with the way you have been treated or the service you have received from Holistic Childcare and Education.



## HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION CLOSEBURN HOUSE AND MABEN HOUSE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



### PRINCIPLES OF HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION'S COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:

- Holistic Childcare and Education recognises that compliments and complaints are an important part of customer feedback.
- All complaints will be investigated fully and fairly.
- Complaints will be dealt with in confidence. The only exception to this is when others could be put at risk by matters referred to in the complaint.
- If the complainant is not happy with the result of the response to the complaint, there is the right to appeal.

### WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

This procedure is for members of the public (for example service users, their parents or stakeholders) who have received a service from Holistic Childcare and Education. This procedure does not cover complaints made by Holistic Childcare and Education staff, volunteers and trustees who need to follow agreed grievance, disciplinary or other internal procedures.

### COMPLAINTS ABOUT HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION

There are three stages that you can go through to try and resolve the problem.

- **Stage one** (Informal) Speak to the individual(s) concerned or their line manager and try to resolve the complaint informally.
- **Stage two** (Formally registering a complaint) If you are not satisfied with the response you have received at stage one (Informal) you should then use stage two of this procedure. Outline the details of your complaint to Holistic Childcare & Education's Complaints Team:
  - Head of Education
  - Director of Care
  - Director of Operations



**HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION**  
**CLOSEBURN HOUSE AND MABEN HOUSE SCHOOL**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**



This team can be contacted by letter (audio tape) and/or e-mail as denoted below:

**By Letter:**

- Hightrees Ltd, T/A Closeburn Centre, Closeburn, Nr Thornhill, Dumfriesshire, DG3 5HP
- Hightrees Ltd, Closeburn House Senior School, Closeburn, Nr Thornhill, Dumfriesshire, DG3 5HP
- Gilmourbanks Ltd, T/A Maben House, Parkfoot, Lochmaben, DG11 1RW
- Gilmourbanks Ltd, Maben House Primary School, Parkfoot, Lochmaben, DG11 1RW

**By E-mail:**

- [office@closeburnhouse.co.uk](mailto:office@closeburnhouse.co.uk)
- [office@mabehouse.co.uk](mailto:office@mabehouse.co.uk)

Your complaint will be acknowledged by letter within seven working days from the date it is received. The letter will contain the following information:

- Name, email and telephone number of the person who will investigate the complaint.
- The date the investigation will start.
- Details of the investigation.
- A decision about whether the complaint was upheld or not.
- The reason for the decision.
- The redress, if appropriate, which will be offered to you e.g. an apology, additional help or directing to other sources of advice or support.
- Any other action that may be taken in light of the complaint.



## HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION CLOSEBURN HOUSE AND MABEN HOUSE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



- If it is not possible to provide a full answer to your complaint within 20 working days, the letter will outline reasons why and give a date by which a full answer is expected.
- **Stage three (Appeal)** If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, then outline the reasons for your dissatisfaction by letter, email or audio tape within 7 working days of receiving the letter to the Director of Operations.
- **TIME LIMITS** In circumstances where time limits cannot be met due to unforeseen circumstances, complainants will be notified in writing. The reasons for the delay with adjusted timescales will be supplied by the person responsible for handling the complaint.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

The Director of Operations of Holistic Childcare and Education is responsible for the efficient operation of this procedure. Responsibility for carrying out investigations of complaints may be delegated to appropriate managers, under the authority of the Director of Operations.

Complaints about school may also be made to the Educational Psychologist or the relevant commissioning Local Education Authority.

We acknowledge the right of our service users, carers/family and external partners to make complaints directly to the Care Inspectorate or HMIE who regulate and inspect our services. We will make efforts to proactively promote this right by providing information directly to service users and their families. If individuals wish to make a complaint direct to the Care Inspectorate or HMIE further information can be found on the relevant websites:

<http://www.careinspectorate.com/>

<https://education.gov.scot/>



## HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION CLOSEBURN HOUSE AND MABEN HOUSE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



### RECORDING COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

Each Director within Holistic Childcare and Education will be responsible for ensuring a record of all compliments and complaints relevant to their area is maintained by the Centre Manager. These will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis.

The Centre Manager will be responsible for collating information about compliments and complaints and recording details of the number received, main reasons for compliments/ complaints, outcomes and how any underlying problems have been resolved.

### UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS BY COMPLAINANTS

People may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a complaint coming to Holistic Childcare and Education. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because a claimant is forceful or determined. However, the actions of complainants who are angry, demanding or persistent may result in unreasonable demands on our resources or in unacceptable behaviour towards Holistic Childcare and Education staff. It is these actions that we consider unacceptable and aim to manage. We have grouped these actions under three broad headings:

- **Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour:** Violence or abuse towards staff is unacceptable. Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language (whether oral or written) that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused. We expect our staff to be treated courteously and with respect. It is not acceptable when anger escalates into aggression directed towards the organisation's staff.



## HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION CLOSEBURN HOUSE AND MABEN HOUSE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



- **Unreasonable Demands:** Complainants may make what we consider unreasonable demands on us through the amount of information they seek, the nature and scale of service they expect or the number of approaches they make. What amounts to unreasonable demands will always depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and the seriousness of the issues raised by the complainant. We consider demands as unacceptable and unreasonable if they start to impact substantially on the work of the department involved, such as taking up an excessive amount of staff time to the disadvantage of other stakeholders, services or functions.
- **Unreasonable Persistence:** We recognise that some complainants will not or cannot accept that Holistic Childcare and Education is unable to provide a level of service other than that provided already. Complainants may persist in disagreeing with the action or decision taken in relation to their complaint or contact us persistently about the same issue. We consider the actions of persistent complainants to be unacceptable when they take up what we regard as being a disproportionate amount of time and resources.

### MANAGING UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS BY COMPLAINANTS

There are relatively few complainants whose actions we consider unacceptable. How we aim to manage these actions depends on their nature and extent. If it adversely affects our ability to do our work and provide a service to others, we may need to restrict complainant contact with us in order to manage the unacceptable action. We aim to do this in a way, wherever possible, that allows a complaint to progress to completion through our Complaints Process. The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards Holistic Childcare and Education staff is likely to result in the ending of all direct contact with the complainant. Incidents may be reported to the police. This will always be the case if physical violence is used or threatened. We do not deal with correspondence (letter, or electronic) that is abusive to staff. When this happens we tell the complainant that we consider their language offensive, unnecessary and unhelpful. We ask them to stop using such language and state that we will not respond to their correspondence if they do not stop. We may require future contact to be through a third party. Holistic Childcare and Education staff will end telephone calls if the caller is considered aggressive,



## HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION CLOSEBURN HOUSE AND MABEN HOUSE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



abusive or offensive. The staff member taking the call has the right to make this decision, tell the caller that the behaviour is unacceptable and end the call if the behaviour does not stop.

Where a complainant repeatedly phones, visits, sends irrelevant documents or raises the same issues, we may decide to:

- Only take telephone calls from the complainant at set times on set days or put an arrangement in place for only one member of staff to deal with calls or correspondence from the complainant in future.
- Require the complainant to make an appointment to see a named member of staff before visiting or that the complainant makes contact in writing only.
- Return the documents to the complainant or, in extreme cases, advise the complainant that further irrelevant documents will be destroyed.
- Take other action that we consider appropriate. We will, however, always tell the complainant what action we are taking and why. Where a complainant continues to correspond on a wide range of issues, and this action is considered excessive, then the complainant is told that only a certain number of issues will be considered in a given period and asked to limit or focus their requests accordingly. Complainant action may be considered unreasonably persistent if all internal review mechanisms have been exhausted and the complainant continues to dispute the decision of Holistic Childcare and Education relating to their complaint. The complainant is told that no future phone calls will be accepted or interviews granted concerning this complaint.



## HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION CLOSEBURN HOUSE AND MABEN HOUSE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Any future contact by the complainant on this issue must be in writing. Future correspondence is read and filed, but only acknowledged or responded to if the complainant provides significant new information relating to the complaint. The Organisation reserves the right to review contract arrangements for services that we provide due to unreasonable actions by complainants. This could result in the termination of contractual arrangements.

### **DECIDING TO RESTRICT COMPLAINANT CONTACT**

Holistic Childcare and Education staff that directly experience aggressive or abusive behaviour from a complainant have the authority to deal immediately with that behaviour in a manner they consider appropriate to the situation and in line with this Policy. Decisions to restrict contact with Holistic Childcare and Education are only taken after careful consideration of the situation by the Director of Operations. Wherever possible, we give a complainant the opportunity to modify their behaviour or action before a decision is taken.

### **RECORDING AND REVIEWING A DECISION TO RESTRICT CONTACT**

We record all incidents of unacceptable actions by complainants. Where it is decided to restrict complainant contact, an entry noting this is made in the relevant file and on appropriate computer records. A decision to restrict complainant contact may be reconsidered if the complainant demonstrates a more acceptable approach.

### **POLICY REVIEW STATEMENT**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislatively or operationally.



**HOLISTIC CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION**  
**CLOSEBURN HOUSE AND MABEN HOUSE SCHOOL**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**



<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Reviewed By</b>	<b>Comments</b>
August 2018	Yvonne Turner – Head Teacher	
August 2018	Kirsty Penny – Director of Care	