



Registered Charity No. 278336

THAMES VALLEY ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

for children & adults with special needs

COMPLAINTS POLICY and PROCEDURE

For Playground Users

Introduction

This procedure is intended to be a good practice guide and will apply to most complaints received. It is not intended to cover matters for which there is a statutory requirement such as Health and safety and Child Protection, which should be dealt with through procedures adopted specifically for these purposes.

All complaints must be taken seriously and recorded either using either the comments book or the formal procedure, as appropriate.

TVAP should ensure that all users are aware of the complaints procedures through inclusion in leaflets, notices and the annual report.

Definition of complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about standard of service, action or lack of action. All formal complaints must be submitted in writing.

Accessibility

Users should be aware of how to lodge a complaint. Complaints procedures must be easily accessible and well publicised.

Efficiency

Procedures should be as clear and speedy as possible, consistent and fair to all.

Redress

If the outcome of the procedure shows that TVAP is at fault it will often be sufficient to provide redress in the form of an acknowledgement that the complaint is valid and been heard. Alternatively it will be appropriate to offer one or more of the following, either written or verbal(and recorded):

- An apology
- An explanation
- A promise that the event to which the complaint relates will not happen again
- An undertaking to review policy and/or procedure in light of the complaint

Support during the procedure

Users have the absolute right to be assisted and/or accompanied by a friend, relative or professional representative at any stage in these proceedings.

Staff whom are being questioned as part of the complaint procedure must feel that they are also being treated fairly and also have the right to be accompanied by a friend, relative or representative.

There is a crucial balance to be maintained between support of the individuals and protection of reputation and investigating complaints thoroughly and impartially. The complaints procedure is distinct from disciplinary procedure for staff and this must be made clear to all concerned. However there may be occasion when the complaint will lead to disciplinary action which may involve the complaint being put on hold until this is resolved - if this is the case the complainant should be kept informed (without details) and the complaints procedure restarted as and when appropriate.

Confidentiality

It is vital that all complaints are dealt with with discretion. Parents/carers must be confident that the process will not penalise their child, however they must also understand that the information will be shared with those involved in order that the complaint can be properly investigated.

Anonymous Complaints

It will be usual for anonymous complaints to be disregarded with regard this procedure, however the content of the complaint should be investigated internally in order to ascertain if it has any merit. The Operations Director will determine if any further action is required.

Training

All staff should be aware of these procedures and training given as necessary. All staff should feel confident about their own role and that of other staff/Trustees within any complaint and know how to instigate and progress the procedure calmly and professionally. Basic training should be given on strategies for dealing with complainants who may be angry or upset.

Records

Complaints should be recorded from the initial time of complaint right through to outcome. All parties involved will have access to any reports/records generated during the procedure except those relating to disciplinary action, if taken/considered. All persons concerned should know how to access these records.

The role of Ofsted

Should the complainant feel that TVAP is not dealing satisfactorily with their complaint they will have the absolute right to approach Ofsted directly.

Ofsted will investigate the complaint accordingly and as to whether there has been a defect in TVAP procedures and work with all concerned to resolve the issue/complaint.

Ofsted will be notified by TVAP of any complaint requiring the instigation of formal proceedings, who will decide what action, if any they wish to take.

Complaints Procedures

For Parents and Carers

We try to work very closely and openly with our users but we do recognise that sometimes problems do occur and are committed to dealing with any concerns or complaints as quickly as possible.

In most cases we would hope that the problem can be resolved at the informal stage, however if you feel that you wish to complain formally then we will aim to make the process as easy as possible and hope to resolve the situation as swiftly and amicably as possible.

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Informal Stage

1. You should contact TVAP and speak to a member of Staff. Most problems can be dealt with promptly and successfully at this stage. TVAP staff may wish to include senior staff in these discussions.
2. To pursue your complaint further at this stage you should ask to speak to the Playground Operations Director. If they are unavailable you should agree a time when this contact can take place.

Formal Stage

3. You should write to the Operations Director. Your letter will be receipted and you will be told when to expect a response. The Operations Director will investigate your complaint and notify you of findings within that time frame. We aim to do this within 15 working days of receipt.

If your complaint is about the Operations' Director then you have the right to be put in touch with the chair of Trustees. Please ask a member of TVAP staff for their details.

4. If you are still unhappy with the situation you can ask to be put in touch with one of the Trustees, TVAP staff will arrange this on your behalf. The appointed Trustee will aim to get back to you within 5 working days to discuss how to progress a resolution. We would aim to resolve the matter within 20 working days of this contact.
5. If you are still unsatisfied with the manner in which your complaint was dealt with or if you are unsatisfied with the outcome you should write to Ofsted at the address below, quoting our URN EY260492, detailing your complaint and action taken. As a matter of courtesy we would appreciate it if you could please let either the Trustee involved or the Playground Operations Director of your actions.

Ofsted Early Years
National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk

6. If you are still unhappy you will then need to pursue your complaint through the Ofsted complaints procedure, details are available on line.