



Autisme Rwanda Complaints Resolution Policy

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Autisme Rwanda is committed to providing high quality, transparent, and accessible services to everyone we educate and support across our schools and children's services. To do this we need you to tell us when we do things well and when we get things wrong.

- We want to help resolve all complaints as quickly as possible. We will handle any expression of dissatisfaction with our services which calls for a response as a complaint.
- We will listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service

You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect, and fairness at all times. We expect that you will also treat our staff dealing with your complaint with the same courtesy, respect, and fairness.

Scope

This policy applies to anyone who wishes to raise a concern about a school or children's service (children's residential services, children's homes or clubs or activities for children) for example:

- A pupil educated in our Autisme Rwanda School or a child or young person supported in a children's service
- Someone advocating or helping a person or a child who cannot complain about themselves.
- A person who has been asked to do so by the young person or child affected
- A parent or guardian representing a child educated or supported by the Autisme Rwanda
- An Autisme Rwanda member or member of an organization related to the Autisme Rwanda; a funding organization/fundraiser.
- A member of the public
- Autisme Rwanda volunteers
- Young people supported by Autisme Rwanda volunteers

The Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead has oversight of all formal complaints and will review this policy at least annually, but sooner as the need arises.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not. Our policy covers complaints about:

The wellbeing of a young person educated or supported by the Autisme Rwanda, • The standard of service you or your child should receive from us, • The conduct of our staff in delivering that service • Any action, or lack of action, by our staff or others, engaged in the Autisme Rwanda business.

Note that any dissatisfaction arising from the proper application of an Autisme Rwanda policy falls outside the scope of this complaint policy.

If there is a concern about safeguarding a child, or there is a belief that a child may be at risk of serious harm, the school/children's service will immediately refer the case to child protection and welfare services. If there is a safeguarding concern, we will investigate this under our Safeguarding Policy and not through this complaints policy. Where a complaint is about the manner in which a safeguarding matter has been handled then that complaint will be addressed through this policy.

Please refer to the school's website for more information on our school's provision for protecting our pupils.

Our standards for handling complaints

- We treat all complaints seriously.
- We can receive complaints by telephone, letter, email, or in person. We can also support you with any reasonable adjustments to access this process
- You may wish to have a third party act on your behalf. A third party is any person or organization helping or supporting you
- You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect, and fairness at all times. We expect that you will also treat our staff dealing with your complaint with the same courtesy, respect, and fairness
- Any information that you give will be kept confidential
- If you wish to remain anonymous we will support this, but we may not be able to update you on the outcome of your complaint or offer you the opportunity to feedback
- We will respond to your complaint promptly
- We will not treat you less favorably than anyone else because of your:

o sex legal marital or same-sex partnership status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependents, and gender (including gender reassignment, whether proposed, commenced or completed)

o sexual orientation color or race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality disability religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation

o any other unjustifiable factors, for example, language difficulties, age, pregnancy, and maternity/paternity

How to complain to us

If you wish to make a complaint, you can do so:

- In-person at the school or service (informal stage only)
- By email – autismerwanda@gmail.com

- Letter to the school or service – **KG 836 St, Gacuriro/Gasabo**
- Telephone (informal stage only) – **(+250)782 414 220**
- By asking a member of staff to help you write your complaint. Please go to the school office. (Informal stage only)

If you require different adjustments, for example, if you have English as a second language, we can support you with an interpreter or if you have a disability and need additional support, let us know by calling the school or children's service and we will put arrangements in place to help you where we can.

Complaints procedure

We have a three-stage complaints procedure.

If you have a concern about an Autisme Rwanda service, school, or team, the easiest way to get your concern resolved will be to raise it directly with your child's teacher, classroom assistant/learning mentor/support worker, or via the school office.

In children's services please raise your concerns with your child's keyworker or any member of staff on duty.

At each stage, it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much clarity and detail as possible. This includes clearly stating that you are making a complaint and if in writing, providing any documents and records of correspondence. If we do not have all the details needed to deal with the complaint, we may contact you and ask you for further information. We will not respond to anonymous complaints but may review the contents of any anonymous complaint under another relevant policy and procedure.

Stage 1 (Informal stage of complaint)

This is the first opportunity for us to resolve your concerns. We hope your complaints will be resolved at this stage and within 5 working days • To complain informally, contact your child's teacher or the school office, and an appropriate member of staff will review the complaint, take any necessary action and get in touch with you.

Or if your concern is about a residential service or club, contact your child's keyworker or any staff member on duty.

Stage 2 (Formal Stage of Complaint – must be made in writing)

- If you are not happy with our response at Stage 1, your complaint will then be investigated by someone more senior in the school or children's service, not linked directly to the complaint and competent to investigate the issue(s) raised. This will typically be the line manager of the subject of the complaint or the Principal/Children's services manager.
- Your written complaint should detail the issues to allow it to be investigated thoroughly. We can signpost you to someone that can help you with this.
- It would help more quickly resolve the complaint if you tell us what you feel would resolve the complaint.
- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within 5 working

days.

- We will send a full response within 20 working days of receiving each complaint. Our response to the complaint will detail the evidence considered in forming a view, a decision to uphold all or part or dismiss the complaint, the proposed resolution, the process for achieving the proposed resolution, any lessons learned, and next steps.

Stage 3 (Appeal)

- If you are still unhappy that we have not resolved your complaint, you may request a review of the complaint's handling and the outcome at Stage 2.
- Your appeal should be made in writing to the school or to the Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead within 10 working days of receiving your response from Stage 2.
- Your appeal must outline why you are appealing the decision. • We will organize a panel of at least three people who were not directly involved in the complaint. One panel member will be independent of the running of the school or service
- You can bring someone with you to support you at the Appeals Panel • We will usually convene the Appeal Panel within 20 working days and you will be notified no less than 1 week before that date.
- Any supporting documentation that you have about the complaint must be sent to the Appeal Panel, at least 5 days before the appeals panel hearing.

The panel's decision is final.

Appendix One: Appeals procedure

The Appeals Panel will determine the procedure to be followed to ensure that it is best placed to deal with the issues arising from the complaint. The procedure for an appeal is usually as follows:

1. The complainant and investigating officer will enter the hearing together
2. The chair will introduce the panel members and outline the process
3. The complainant will explain the complaint
4. The investigating officer and panel will question the complainant
5. The investigating officer will explain the service or school's actions
6. The complainant and panel will question the investigating officer
7. The complainant will sum up their complaint
8. The investigating officer will sum up the service or school's actions
9. The chair will explain that both parties will hear from the panel in writing within 5 working days
10. Both parties will leave together while the panel deliberates. The appeals panel may:
 - dismiss all or part of the complaint
 - uphold all or part of the complaint

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- evaluate all the evidence available and recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures as a preventative step against similar problems arising in the future.

Appendix Two: Unreasonable complaints

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly, fully, and in a timely manner and we will not normally limit the contact which complainants have with staff.

Sometimes, however, people with complaints or other issues may treat staff and others in a way that is unacceptable. Whilst we understand that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening, inappropriate, or harassing behavior toward our staff.

An unreasonable complainant maybe anyone who engages in unreasonable behavior when making a complaint. This will include people who complain in an unreasonable manner and those who do not act in an appropriate way towards our staff.

This includes:

Actions which are:

- Out of proportion to the nature of the complaint, or
- Persistent – even when the complaints procedure has been exhausted Or
- Personally harassing, or
- Unjustifiably repetitious or
- Obsessive, harassing, or prolific
- Prolific correspondence or excessive email or telephone contact about a concern or complaint.
- Making inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations
- Repeatedly demanding disciplinary action be taken against staff
- Recording meetings or telephone conversations without consent.
- Repetitious complaints where the complainant has no view about what would satisfy him/her and/or no intention to resolve the complaint.
- Acting in a way, not in line with Charity's aim of reaching a resolution and working with the Charity

An insistence on:

- Pursuing unjustified or unmeritorious complaints and/or
- Unrealistic outcomes to unjustified complaints

An insistence on:

- Pursuing justifiable complaints in an unreasonable manner e.g. using abusive or threatening language;
- Making complaints in public; or
- Refusing to attend appointments to discuss the complaint.

The person complaining will first be told that we consider their language offensive or their behavior unacceptable, and will be asked to stop using such language or behavior. Where complaints are deemed vexatious or the unacceptable behavior does not stop, the complainant will be notified in writing that no further correspondence will be entered into the matter in question.

If further contact is necessary, the complainant will be informed that it will be made through a Director or their nominated officer/s. A decision to restrict contact will be reconsidered if the complainant subsequently demonstrates more reasonable behavior.

All incidents of harassment or aggression will be documented and referred to senior staff. In appropriate circumstances, these matters may be referred to the police and the Charity may consider taking appropriate legal action against the complainant, if necessary, without prior warning.