



COMPLAINTS POLICY

VERSION CONTROL		
Date	Description	Responsible
29 Oct 2020	Created & Approved	Board
25 Mar 2023	Reviewed & Approved	Board
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Purpose

EIL/AFS Ireland is committed to ensuring that all our communications and dealings with participants, host families, members, the general public, our supporters and all who engage with us are of the highest possible standard. We welcome both positive and negative feedback, so that we can continue to improve our work. Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- It is easy to make a complaint;
- We treat any clear expression of dissatisfaction with our operations which calls for a response as a complaint;
- We treat complaints seriously, and we deal with them quickly and politely;
- We respond accordingly – for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, and information on any action taken, and;
- We learn from complaints and use them to improve.

The purpose of this policy is to assist the Board and staff of EIL/AFS Ireland to effectively achieve the objectives listed above.

Scope

This policy applies to all Members of the Board of EIL/AFS Ireland, and all staff receiving or managing complaints made to or about the organisation. It also applies to any individuals or bodies who have engaged with the organisation who wish to make a complaint.

The procedure outlined in this policy for making a complaint does not apply to staff or volunteers working directly on behalf of EIL/AFS Ireland. The complaints procedure for staff is outlined in the Employee Handbook, and the complaints procedure for volunteers is outlined in the Volunteer Policy.

Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Chairperson of the Board are responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers are expected to facilitate this process and cooperate with the CEO. The Board of EIL/AFS Ireland is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Procedure

1. Informal Complaints

1.1. Making an Informal Complaint

Informal complaints can be made by an individual or an organisation at any time, to any EIL/AFS Ireland Board member or member of staff. A complaint can be made in-person, by phone or in writing.

1.2. Responding to an Informal Complaint

When an informal complaint is received, it will be dealt with in the following manner:

- The recipient of the complaint will speak to the complainant and ask for any additional information or context as necessary.
- The recipient will discuss potential solutions to any issues raised by the complainant, and attempt to agree a way forward that suits both parties.
- Where possible, the recipient of the complaint will address any issues raised immediately.
- Where immediate resolution is not possible, the recipient will outline a clear timeline for follow up with the complainant, and seek to address any issues raised as soon as possible.
- If the complaint is resolved in this manner, the details of the complaint and resolution will be recorded by the recipient.

If an informal complaint cannot be resolved in the manner outlined above, or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or proposed solutions, they can submit a formal complaint as outlined below.

2. Formal Complaints

2.1. Making a Formal Complaint

Formal complaints can be made by an individual or an organisation at any time, by submitting a complaint in writing to complaints@eilireland.org. When making a formal complaint, please provide as much information and context as possible. All complaints submitted to this address will be brought to the attention of the CEO and the Chairperson of the Board. Only the Senior Management Team, consisting of the CEO, Head of Programmes, and the Head of Finance and Administration, have access to this email address.

2.2. Responding to a Formal Complaint

When a formal complaint is received, it will be dealt with in the following manner:

- A member of staff will be appointed to process the complaint.
- This staff member responsible will contact the complainant within 5 working days to:
 - acknowledge receipt of the complaint,
 - confirm the details of the complaint,
 - ask for any additional information or context as required,
 - confirm what outcome the complainant is hoping for in making the complaint.

- The staff member responsible will then investigate the details of the complaint internally, and assess solutions to any issues raised.
- This process must be completed within 30 days. Where this is not possible, the staff member responsible must notify the complainant, with an explanation for the delay.
- Once an investigation is completed, the staff member responsible will contact the complainant to notify them of the outcome.
- If the complaint is resolved in this manner, the details of the complaint and resolution will be recorded by the staff member responsible.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of this investigation, they must make an appeal in writing to the same email address: complaints@eilireland.org, outlining the reason for their dissatisfaction. In the event of an appeal:

- The Board will be notified, and a Board member will be appointed to carry out a review of the appeal.
- This Board member will contact the complainant within 10 working days to:
 - acknowledge receipt of the appeal,
 - confirm the details of the appeal,
 - ask for any additional information or context as required,
 - confirm what outcome the complainant is hoping for in making the appeal.
- The Board member responsible will then investigate the details of the complaint and appeal internally, and assess the validity of the appeal.
- This process must be completed within 30 days. Where this is not possible, the Board member responsible must notify the complainant, with an explanation for the delay.
- The Board member responsible will provide a report to the Board on completion of their investigation, and the Board will make a final decision on the outcome of the appeal.
- Once a decision has been made, the Board member responsible will contact the complainant to notify them of the outcome.