

Complaints Policy

Appletree Treatment Centre (ATC)



Approved by: Rowan Knapton (Principal)

Last reviewed on: June 2025

Next review by: June 2026



INTRODUCTION

Any complaint made by a child or adult at Appletree Treatment Centre is taken seriously by the staff to whom it is made. It is vital that children and adults feel able to talk about concerns and confident that they will be believed and helped. This is crucial to creating a safe and caring environment. Children can also ask any adult whom they trust to raise a complaint on their behalf. They will also be supported to contact a suitably skilled Advocate. Any documentation relating to a complaint is kept confidential. Complaints are dealt with by senior members of staff unless the complaint is about that person. Anyone making a complaint may choose to do so directly to Ofsted:

Address:

Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone number:

0300 123 1231

Children will also be encouraged to access their Placing Authorities Complaint's Procedure. There are several categories into which complaints may fall: -

A. COMPLAINTS MADE BY CHILDREN

A1. Complaints about the building, temperature, food or other material aspects of Appletree Treatment Centre

In this instance it is the responsibility of the staff to try and sort out the problem if it is within their capability - for example turning up the heating if it is cold. If they are unsure what to do, then they can consult the senior staff on duty or the senior on call. If the complaint is more than something that can be quickly sorted by staff on duty (such as a child feeling cold) then the complaint itself and the action taken are then written up in the Log within 24 hours.

If the problem needs the attention of the Maintenance Person, Senior Housekeeper, Assistant Headteacher, Registered Manager or Principal they are informed as soon as possible and this is also recorded in the Log. The problem needs to be dealt with promptly and action decided within a week.

A2. Complaints about the actions of other children

If the complaint raises issues of Child Protection or abuse then the procedure is followed as outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.



If the complaint does not raise such issues, then staff talk with all children involved individually as soon as possible and try to help them resolve the problem or lay it to rest. The complaint and action taken should be written up in the Log by the end of the day.

If the problem is not resolved, then the complaint is handed on to the Senior on Call or Principal who will deal with it and record their actions in the Complaints Record Log and in the Complaints Log. This process should be completed within 48 hours.

Please see Child Friendly Complaints and Grumbles Policy for further information.

A3. Complaints about members of staff

If the complaint raises issues of Child Protection or abuse then the procedure is followed as outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (see sections 5 and 7).

Even if the child says they do not wish to complain this policy and procedure must be followed.

If the complaint does not raise such issues the child can choose to speak informally to the staff member about whom they are making the complaint. This meeting must always take place with the knowledge of the Registered Manager and/or Principal. If the child does not choose to talk to the staff member then the complaint will be considered by the Senior Team member most appropriate.

No person who is the subject of a complaint should take any part in its consideration, other than if the Designated Safeguarding Lead person (see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy) thinks it appropriate, at the informal resolution stage only. The complaint and any action taken are recorded in the Log. Any complaint reported to the Principal will be recorded in the Log. Such records should be made by the end of the day.

It is important to remember in all of the above cases that any child who is unhappy can talk to a Senior member of staff or the Principal or call anyone who they think may be able to help them. Staff will assist them to make these calls and give them privacy to do so should they request it. In the case of a serious complaint parents and/or social workers are informed and kept up to date via the usual weekly contact calls. It is vital that staff and children understand that there will be no reprisals against anyone making a complaint.

If the complaint against a member of staff raises safeguarding concerns the person with LADO responsibility within Cumbria would be contacted within



one working day of becoming aware or the police being notified (For contact details for LADO see page 6 of this policy, Important contacts.)

B. COMPLAINTS MADE BY PARENTS OR THOSE PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED WITH OUR CHILDREN

1. Complaints about the building, temperature, food or other material aspects of Appletree Treatment Centre follow procedure outlined in A.1.
2. Complaints about the actions of other children, follow procedure outlined in A.2.
3. Complaints about members of staff, follow procedure outlined in A.3.

If the parent/professional is not satisfied with this response, they may choose to put their complaint in writing or get someone else to do this for them. The complaint will then be considered by a panel of three people not directly involved with the complaint.

This panel will usually comprise of members of the Senior Team which includes the Registered Managers of Appletree Treatment Centre homes, Assistant Headteacher's and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It will also include one of our Consultants or School Solicitor who are independent of the management and running of the school or home. Parents may choose to attend the panel hearing and may choose someone to accompany them. The complainant, proprietor, Assistant Headteacher and where relevant the person complained about will be given copies of the panel findings and recommendations. All correspondence, statements and records of complaints are kept confidential. The panel can make findings and set recommendations. Responses to complaints of this nature will receive a formal written response within 28 days.

C. COMPLAINTS MADE BY COLLEAGUES

1. Complaints about the building, temperature, food or other material aspects of Appletree Treatment Centre follow procedure outlined in A.1.
2. Complaints about the actions of other children, follow procedure outlined in A.2.
3. Complaints about members of staff, follow procedure outlined in A.3.

If the team member is not satisfied with this response they may choose to put their complaint in writing or get someone else to do this for them. The complaint will then be considered by a panel of three people not directly involved with the complaint. This panel will usually comprise of members of the Senior Team which includes Registered Managers of Appletree Treatment Centre, Assistant Headteacher and DSL. It will also include one of our Consultants or School Solicitor, who are independent of the management and



running of the school or home. The staff member may choose to attend the panel hearing and may choose someone to accompany them. The complainant, proprietor, Assistant Headteacher and where relevant the person complained about will be given copies of the panel findings and recommendations. All correspondence, statements and records of complaints are kept confidential. The panel can make findings and set recommendations. Responses to complaints of this nature will receive a formal written response within 28 days.

4. COMPLAINTS MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

As with all internal complaints, any comment or complaint from people outside of Appletree Treatment Centre should be taken seriously and responded to speedily and courteously. If appropriate we ask for the complaint to be put in writing, and where possible the complainant's preferred outcome.

The member of the team to whom the complaint is made should assure the person that the matter will be fully examined. If the complaint is received in writing we must acknowledge it either by telephone or in writing within 3 days. If we know that our children have been rude or behaved unacceptably, apologise and ask if we may have their address. We can then make sure that the children write an apology or draw a picture (if they are unable to write) to accompany our apology letter.

Any complaint should be passed on to the Senior Member of Staff on duty. They can then inform the Senior on Call or Principal if they think that further contact is needed. The Senior on Call or Principal may choose to contact the person themselves, write or invite the person to visit as is most appropriate. Our response should be made in a formal manner where appropriate, as soon as possible within 28 days from receipt of the complaint.

We want our children to be integrated into the community. They will inevitably sometimes make mistakes. If we handle these situations well, there is an opportunity for our children to learn and for other people to understand something of the work which we do.

MONITORING SYSTEMS

Complaints are monitored through our Regulation 44 checks and Regulation 45 monitoring. They are also monitored as part of monthly KPI's and Governance Meetings. All Senior Management are aware of all complaints and monitor the number and nature we receive over a given period of time.

Documents relating to complaints are stored as part of the ATC Monitoring on the central network. Where appropriate, complaints will be stored in individual folders for children and adults.



Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Proprietor	Amanda Irwin	a.turnbull@appletreetc.co.uk 01539560253
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Pastoral Lead	Craig Dart	c.dart@appletreetc.co.uk 015395 60253
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Registered Manager Fell House	Amanda Fishwick	a.fishwick@appletreetc.co.uk 015395 35926
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Registered Manager Willow Bank	Russell Clement	russ.clement@appletreetc.co.uk 01539 726670
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Manager Appletree Home	Jon Close	j.close@appletreetc.co.uk 015395 60253
Deputy DSL Deputy Manager Appletree Home	Abigail Doughty	a.doughty@appletreetc.co.uk 015395 60253
Deputy DSL Assistant Head Teacher Appletree School	Sonia Morgan	s.morgan@appletreetc.co.uk 015395 60253
Deputy DSL Assistant Head Teacher Fell House School	Abigail Woodburn	a.woodburn@appletreetc.co.uk 015395 35926
Deputy DSL Deputy Manager Fell House	Matthew Moore	m.moore@appletreetc.co.uk 015395 35926
Local Authority Designated Officer - (LADO) Westmorland & Furness		lado@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk 0300 303 3897
Westmorland & Furness Safeguarding Hub		safeguarding.hub@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk 0300 373 2724
Cumbria Prevent Lead		prevent@cumbria.police.uk