



Chelmsford Young Generation Amateur Musical Society

Registered Charity 275186

www.young-gen.co.uk

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

How concerns and complaints will be raised, considered and resolved

Reviewed	June 2026
Next Review Due	June 2027

Purpose

Young Gen is committed to providing a high-quality, safe, fair and positive experience for all members, parents/carers, volunteers, chaperones, committee members, production team members, hirers and visitors.

We recognise that concerns or complaints may occasionally arise. This policy and procedure explains how complaints about Young Gen will be raised, considered and resolved. It is intended to help concerns be dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and constructively, while ensuring that safeguarding, welfare and legal duties are not delayed or diluted.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to complaints made by members, parents/carers, volunteers, chaperones, committee members, production team members, contractors, hirers, visitors, members of the public and others involved with Young Gen activities.

It may apply to concerns about administration, communication, rehearsal or performance arrangements, behaviour, fairness, decisions made by Young Gen, use of facilities, the conduct of Young Gen committee members or volunteers, or the way a matter has been handled.

This policy and procedure should be read alongside Young Gen's Safeguarding Policy, Suspicion of Abuse Procedure, Code of Conduct for Adults, Code of Conduct for Cast Members, Behaviour, Conduct and Discipline Procedure, Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy, Online and Social Media Policy, Privacy Notice, Whistleblowing Policy and any production-specific risk assessments or instructions.

Principles

- Complaints will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Young Gen will seek to resolve concerns at the earliest appropriate stage.
- Children and young people will be treated with dignity and care throughout any process.
- Information will be shared only with those who need to know, except where sharing is necessary to protect someone, comply with legal duties or seek appropriate advice.
- Safeguarding concerns, allegations about adults working with children, and immediate safety concerns will always be dealt with under safeguarding procedures first.
- People involved in considering a complaint should be as impartial as possible and should declare any conflict of interest.
- Complaints should be raised honestly, respectfully and in good faith.

What This Policy and Procedure Does Not Replace

This complaints policy and procedure must not be used instead of safeguarding action. If a child, young person or adult at risk may be at risk of harm, the matter must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Assistant immediately. If anyone is in immediate danger, needs urgent medical assistance, or a crime is in progress, 999 must be called.

Where a concern may meet the threshold for an allegation against an adult working with children, Young Gen will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer/LADO route before any internal investigation.

Whistleblowing concerns about serious wrongdoing, unsafe practice, safeguarding failure, fraud, cover-up or serious mismanagement should be raised under the Whistleblowing Policy. Some matters may overlap, and Young Gen will decide the most appropriate route.

How to Raise a Complaint

Young Gen encourages open communication and will try to resolve concerns informally where this is appropriate. A concern or complaint may be raised verbally or in writing with the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Designated Safeguarding Lead or another trustee/committee member.

Where possible, complaints should be put in writing so that the concern and the outcome sought are clear. A formal written complaint may be submitted by email to alisonk@young-gen.co.uk or by post to Young Gen's registered address.

The complaint should include, where known:

- the name and contact details of the person making the complaint;
- the name of the child or young person concerned, if relevant;
- what happened, including dates, times, locations and people involved;
- what has already been done to try to resolve the matter;
- any documents, messages or evidence that may help Young Gen understand the concern;
- what outcome or remedy is being sought.

If the complaint is about the person who would normally receive it, it should be raised with another appropriate trustee or committee member. If the complaint raises a safeguarding concern about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, it should be raised with the Safeguarding Assistant and/or Chair or Vice-Chair.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, Young Gen will first try to resolve a concern informally. This may involve a conversation, clarification of expectations, an apology where appropriate, correction of an error, or practical action to prevent the issue recurring.

Informal resolution will not be used where the concern indicates a safeguarding risk, serious misconduct, possible criminal behaviour, or a matter requiring formal committee consideration.

Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if it is more serious, Young Gen will treat it as a formal complaint. A suitable trustee, committee member or small panel will be appointed to consider the matter. Anyone with a significant conflict of interest should not lead the review.

Young Gen will usually acknowledge a formal complaint within 7 calendar days and aim to provide a written outcome within 21 calendar days. If more time is needed, the complainant will be updated and given an expected timescale.

The person or panel considering the complaint may speak to relevant people, review documents, seek advice, consider relevant policies and decide what action, if any, is appropriate. The response may include an explanation, apology, practical remedy, policy reminder, conduct action, safeguarding action, referral to another procedure, or no further action where the complaint is not upheld.

Stage 3 - Review of Outcome

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review within 14 calendar days of the outcome being sent. The request should explain why the outcome is considered unreasonable or why the process was unfair.

A review will usually be considered by the Chair, Vice-Chair or other trustee/committee member who was not directly involved in the original decision, where practicable. The review is not normally a full rehearing but will consider whether the complaint was handled fairly, whether relevant information was considered and whether the outcome was reasonable.

The review outcome will usually be provided within 21 calendar days. The review outcome will normally be the final stage of Young Gen's complaints process.

Complaints Involving Children and Young People

Where a complaint involves a child or young person, Young Gen will consider their welfare, views and feelings in an age-appropriate way. A parent/carer will normally be involved unless doing so would increase risk or be inappropriate for safeguarding reasons.

Children and young people should not be drawn unnecessarily into adult disputes. Any discussion with a child should be handled sensitively and only where necessary to understand or resolve the matter.

Confidentiality, Records and Data Protection

Young Gen will keep a factual record of formal complaints, decisions, actions taken and any learning points. Records will be stored securely and shared only on a need-to-know basis in line with the Privacy Notice and safeguarding requirements.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information must be shared to protect a child, adult at risk or other person, to seek safeguarding advice, to report a serious incident, to comply with legal or regulatory duties, or to involve insurers or legal advisers.

Unreasonable, Repeated or Malicious Complaints

Young Gen will take genuine complaints seriously, even where they are not upheld. However, Young Gen may limit contact or refuse to reconsider matters that are abusive, knowingly false, malicious, repeatedly raised after a final outcome, or pursued in a way that is unreasonable and disproportionate.

Any decision to restrict further handling of a complaint should be made by the Chair, Vice-Chair or trustees, recorded with reasons, and must not prevent safeguarding concerns from being reported or considered.

External Reporting

If a concern involves immediate danger, urgent medical need or a crime in progress, call 999.

Safeguarding concerns may also be referred to the appropriate statutory safeguarding agency, LADO route, Police, NSPCC or other relevant body.

The Charity Commission is not a general appeal body for every internal charity complaint. However, serious concerns about significant harm, safeguarding failure, fraud, serious mismanagement or damage to the charity may need to be raised externally or reported by trustees as appropriate.

Learning, Monitoring and Review

Young Gen will use complaints as an opportunity to improve practice, communication, policies, training and decision-making. The Committee will review complaints annually to identify any recurring issues, areas for improvement or learning for the Society.

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually, or sooner if guidance, legislation, local procedures or Young Gen arrangements change.