



ROCKHOPPER
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

LIMEDALE HOUSE

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Publication Date: July 2025

Review Date: July 2026

LIMEDALE HOUSE

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

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LIMEDALE HOUSE

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Parents, carers and others may complain directly to Limesdale House, if they are unhappy with any aspect of the care provided, by contacting:

Jade Perkins - Registered Manager

Limesdale House, 95 St Johns Road, Buxton, SK17 6UT

Telephone: 01298 446746

Email: jade.perkins@rockhoppercs.com

(Address and postcode available on request)

All complaints are taken seriously and dealt with without delay and our aim is to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Any person who is the subject of a formal complaint will not be responsible for resolving or responding to it.

***Any concern regarding the Registered Manager must be referred to the
Managing Director, Rockhopper Children's Services, Fay Shelton
via email fay.shelton@rockhoppercs.com or telephone 07773 963 983***

We are happy to provide access to an advocate so that a complainant may be supported.

At each stage of the process, the complaint will be dealt with and fully responded to, in writing **within 20 working days** of the referral being made. An extension to this limit may be agreed where necessary and the complainant kept informed of progress.

Stage One: Informal Resolution

Stage Two: Formal Complaint

Stage Three: Appeal

Stage Four: Appeal to Rockhopper Children's Services Directors

Stage Five: Complaints Panel

If you are not satisfied with our response and feel it is right to take the matter outside of Limesdale House, the following are possible contact points, one or more of which may be appropriate:

- the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) at Piccadilly Gate, Store Street. Manchester. M1 2WD. Telephone 0300 123 1231 Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- Directors of Rockhopper Children's Services (Limesdale House's parent company)
Unit 7, Brook Business Centre, Cowley Mill Road, Uxbridge. UB8 2FX

Telephone: 0203 823 3033 Fax: 020 7681 2153 Email: info@kedlestongroup.com

For further information on the Complaints procedure for parents, carers and significant others, please see Section 4.

1. Introduction

As a registered Children's Home, Limedale House complies with [The Children's Homes \(England\) Regulations 2015](#) and the [Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards \(2015\)](#).

Limedale House acknowledges the obligations associated with the the [Children Act 1989](#), the [Human Rights Act 1998](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#). We also follow current DfE guidance, '[Keeping children safe in education](#)' (2022), '[Working together to safeguard children](#)' (2018)¹, HM Government advice '[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)' (2015) and the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership's² policies, procedures, guidance and protocols.

This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including Rockhopper Children's Services (Limedale House, Limedale House consultants, agency staff, volunteers, students on placement and any other individual working for, or on behalf of Limedale House) and children and should be read in conjunction with other safeguarding and employment policies including (not an exhaustive list):

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Driver and Vehicle Policy
- Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Management of Behaviour: Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Off-Site Visits Policy
- Online Safety and Multi-Media Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) Policy
- Runaway, Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) Policy
- Safe Working Practice Policy (Code of Conduct)
- Self-Harm and Suicide Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

Failure to comply with these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action, which might include summary dismissal (and referral to the [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) and the [Teacher Regulation Agency \(TRA\)](#), where appropriate) or termination of agreement or contract.

2. Definitions

A 'concern' may be defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought".

A 'complaint' may be defined as "an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action".

¹ Last updated 1 July 2022

² Some local authorities still use the term 'Local Safeguarding Children Board'.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to follow formal procedures. We take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly and efficiently as possible.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Rockhopper Children's Services (Limedale House's parent company) endorses this policy and has delegated responsibility for its effective operation to the Registered Manager.

We expect and encourage all our staff to tell us as soon as they become aware of any circumstances that could give rise - or *be seen* to give rise - to a conflict of interest in responding to a complaint (whether or not the parties to a complaint have raised the potential conflict). In any such circumstances, the member of staff will be expected to withdraw from the process, and the complaint passed to someone else to investigate and/or consider.

4. Compliments policy

We ensure that compliments received from children, staff, parents, carers, local authorities and others are properly recorded, acknowledged (where appropriate) and conveyed to the individuals being thanked and to all other interested parties.

A compliment may refer to children or staff and may relate to an individual, a group/team or the children's home, as a whole.

Compliments and expressions of appreciation are valuable in monitoring the effectiveness of our provision and can provide useful learning points and examples of good practice, which should be shared throughout the organisation.

An individual wishing to make a compliment can do so either:

- In-person
- By telephone **01298 446746**
- By e-mail to **jade.perkins@rockhoppercs.com**
- By post: **Address and postcode available on request**
- By contacting Directors of Rockhopper Children's Services (Limedale House's parent company)
Unit 7, Brook Business Centre, Cowley Mill Road, Uxbridge. UB8 2FX
Telephone: 0203 823 3033 Fax: 020 7681 2153 Email: info@kedlestongroup.com

Children are free to express their compliments and gratitude by drawing pictures, designing/writing cards, poems etc.

All compliments should be brought to the attention of the Registered Manager Jade Perkins, who will, in turn, ensure such feedback is acknowledged (where appropriate) and conveyed to all interested parties.

A record of all compliments should be maintained and where a specific individual is identified, a record will be entered in their personal file.

5. Complaints procedure for children

All children are provided with information about their right to complain, how to complain and what happens when they complain, during their induction and are reminded of the procedures as necessary.

Children can complain directly to Limedale House, in person, in writing or by telephone, if they are unhappy with any aspect of the education or care provided, by contacting:

Jade Perkins - Registered Manager

Limedale House, 95 St Johns Road, Buxton, SK17 6UT

Telephone: 01298 446746 Email: jade.perkins@rockhoppercs.com

(Address and postcode available on request)

A complaint may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the child if they have appropriate consent to do so.

All complaints are taken seriously, will be dealt with without delay and result in a clear response.

Children can also elect to telephone, or send a letter of complaint directly and unopened to:

- the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) at Piccadilly Gate, Store Street. Manchester. M1 2WD. Telephone 0300 123 1231 Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- The Office of the Children's Commissioner (Help at Hand)
(For children in care, leaving care, living away from home)
Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London. SW1P 3BT
Telephone: 0800 528 0731 Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
(9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday)
- an officer of the referring authority
- an independent advocate/visitor of the child
- Directors of Rockhopper Children's Services (Limedale House's parent company)
Unit 7, Brook Business Centre, Cowley Mill Road, Uxbridge. UB8 2FX
Telephone: 0203 823 3033 Fax: 020 7681 2153 Email: info@kedlestongroup.com

Our aim is to resolve complaints, wherever possible, to the satisfaction of the child.

Children can take up issues in the most appropriate way with support and without fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. No action will be taken against a child making a complaint, simply because they have made a complaint.

Any person who is the subject of a formal complaint is not allowed to take any responsibility for resolving or responding to the complaint.

Children may be accompanied by another person to support them when making a complaint.

At each stage of the process, the complaint will be dealt with and fully responded to, in writing **within 20 working days** of the referral being made. An extension to this limit may be agreed where necessary and the child kept informed of the progress.

The child will also be advised of any escalation options available, at each stage of the procedure e.g., when communicating the outcome of the stage one process, the child will be given details of the stage two process etc.

Stage One: Informal Resolution

Children are encouraged to resolve problems immediately and directly with the person concerned, but where a child does not feel comfortable speaking to the individual on their own, they may seek the support of a member of staff, of their choice. Any child may have the matter pursued further, if not satisfied with the proposed informal resolution.

Stage Two: Formal Complaint

The child will always be asked what they think might resolve the issue at the earliest stage, but if a child is not satisfied with the proposed informal resolution, including acknowledgement simply that the setting could have handled the situation better, or the matter is considered more serious, they may make a formal complaint.

Any formal complaint should be recorded, in writing or by other means, (children may ask for help with the writing of their complaint) and forwarded to the Registered Manager Jade Perkins. All formal complaints must be recorded in the electronic complaints log.

The Registered Manager Jade Perkins will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within two days. The Registered Manager can consider whether a face to face meeting is appropriate to discuss the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the child would like to see.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Registered Manager will provide a formal written response within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. An extension to this limit may be agreed where necessary and the child kept informed of the progress. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Limesdale House will take to resolve the complaint. It will also advise the child of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

***Any concern regarding the Registered Manager must be referred to the
Managing Director, Rockhopper Children's Services, Fay Shelton
via email fay.shelton@rockhoppercs.com or telephone 07773 963 983***

Any child can ask at any time to see any member of the Leadership Team or can ask for a sealed letter to be given to them, which will only be opened by them.

During this phase, children are actively encouraged to involve an independent advocate (e.g., parent, carer, social worker or independent visitor), who will be informed and invited to support the child.

Stage Three: Appeal

If the child remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 the complaint will then be considered by the Managing Director or other member of the Rockhopper Children's Services Corporate Team.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Managing Director or other member of the Rockhopper Children's Services Corporate Team will provide a formal written response within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. An extension to this limit may be agreed where necessary and the child kept informed of the progress. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Limedale House will take to resolve the complaint. It will also advise the child of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3.

Stage Four: Appeal to Rockhopper Children's Services Directors

If the child remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3 the complaint will then be considered by the Chief Operating Officer or another Rockhopper Children's Services Director.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Chief Operating Officer or another Rockhopper Children's Services Director will provide a formal written response within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. An extension to this limit may be agreed where necessary and the child kept informed of the progress. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Limedale House will take to resolve the complaint. It will also advise the child of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 4.

Stage Five: Complaints Panel

Where the child wishes to take their complaint further, it will be considered by a panel consisting of at least three, suitably skilled people, who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint or in the earlier stages of the complaint process, including:

- A senior manager from Rockhopper Children's Services
- A Director of Rockhopper Children's Services
- A person, independent of the management and running of Limedale House or Rockhopper Children's Services (Limedale House's parent company) e.g. an independent visitor/advocate, social worker, officer of the local authority etc.

Members of the panel must not have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint; and written consent must be obtained from the child (or person holding parental responsibility for the child), before disclosing information to a third party.

The child may attend and can be accompanied at a panel if they wish.

For **guidance on the conduct of a complaints panel**, see Appendix 1.

The findings and recommendations of the panel will be given to the child, the Registered Manager, Chief Operating Officer, Rockhopper Children's Services and where relevant the person against whom the complaint has been made.

Urgent action will also be taken to improve practice, services and outcomes, where appropriate. Children will be supported to understand what has happened because of their complaint, and feedback will always be sought from the child about their experience of using Limesdale House's complaints process.

Any correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be stored securely and kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under children's homes section 148, requests access to them.

When necessary, relevant issues will always be brought to the notice of:

- The referring/placing authority
- Parents/carers
- Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

Complaints concerning allegations of child abuse or safeguarding must be referred to children's social care and the referring authority, in accordance with our 'Child Protection Policy'.

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Registered Manager will consider whether any sanction is appropriate against the child who made it.

In addition to the other methods for making complaints, as described above, children have been informed about **Childline** and telephone numbers for the following organisations are displayed in a prominent position:

- [Childline](#) (Childline is a service provided by NSPCC)
- the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)
- The Office of the Children's Commissioner – [Help at Hand](#); and
- Children's social care (Office Hours and Out of Hours).

Telephone access to the above is always available.

The electronic complaints log and a copy of this policy document are kept on the homes Clearcare area, and both are open to inspection by officers from placing local authorities, DfE and Ofsted Inspectors.

The record will state whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure, or proceeded to a panel hearing, include details of any action taken by the setting as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld) and the outcome of any investigation.

The referring authority will always be informed of any complaint that is reported to an external agency, parents or carers; and a specific named person will be consulted immediately and invited to take part in any discussions that ensue.

6. Complaints procedure for parents, carers, significant others³, independent advocates, officers from referring authorities, external bodies (e.g., the police) and members of the public

Any of the above may complain directly to Limesdale House, in person, in writing or by telephone, if they are unhappy with any aspect of the education or care provided, by contacting:

Jade Perkins - Registered Manager

Limesdale House, 95 St Johns Road, Buxton, SK17 6UT

Telephone: 01298 446746

Email: jade.perkins@rockhoppercs.com

(Address and postcode available on request)

A complaint may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the complainant if they have appropriate consent to do so.

Where a complaint arises from a conflict between a number of adults, each claiming to have parental responsibility for a particular child (e.g., estranged parents), the Registered Manager Jade Perkins may refer to the DfE guidance '[Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#)'⁴ which contains specific advice about how to approach issues concerning parental responsibility.

Complaints from Limesdale House staff will be dealt with, in accordance with our Grievance Procedure.

If you are not satisfied with our response and feel it is right to take the matter outside of Limesdale House, the following are possible contact points, one or more of which may be appropriate:

- the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) at Piccadilly Gate, Store Street. Manchester. M1 2WD. Telephone 0300 123 1231 Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- Directors of Rockhopper Children's Services (Limesdale House's parent company)
Unit 7, Brook Business Centre, Cowley Mill Road, Uxbridge. UB8 2FX
Telephone: 0203 823 3033 Fax: 020 7681 2153 Email: info@kedlestongroup.com

All complaints are taken seriously and dealt with without delay and our aim is to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Any person who is the subject of a formal complaint will not be responsible for resolving or responding to it.

***Any concern regarding the Registered Manager must be referred to the
Managing Director, Rockhopper Children's Services, Fay Shelton
via email fay.shelton@rockhoppercs.com or telephone 07773 963 983***

We are happy to provide access to an advocate so that a complainant may be supported.

³ Includes parents, carers and significant others etc. associated with ex-residents.

⁴ Last updated 3 September 2018

At each stage of the process, the complaint will be dealt with and fully responded to, in writing **within 20 working days** of the referral being made. An extension to this limit may be agreed where necessary and the complainant kept informed of the progress.

The complainant will also be advised of any escalation options available, at each stage of the procedure e.g., when communicating the outcome of the stage one process, the complainant will be given details of the stage two process etc.

Stage One: Informal Resolution

Where an individual wishes to make a complaint in person or by telephone, a senior member of staff will take reasonable steps to resolve the complaint directly, but any complainant may have the matter pursued further, if not satisfied with the proposed informal resolution.

If the complaint is resolved at this stage, it should still be recorded in the electronic complaints log.

Stage Two: Formal Complaint

The complainant will always be asked what they think might resolve the issue at the earliest stage, but if they are not satisfied with the proposed informal resolution, including acknowledgement simply that the setting could have handled the situation better, the complaint should be recorded (in writing or by other means) and given to the Registered Manager. If a complaint is received in writing (by email or post), the complaint will be addressed in accordance with our formal complaints procedure.

All formal complaints must be recorded in the electronic complaints log.

The Registered Manager will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within two school days. The Registered Manager can consider whether a face to face meeting is appropriate to discuss the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Registered Manager will provide a formal written response within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. An extension to this limit may be agreed where necessary and the complainant kept informed of the progress. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Limesdale House will take to resolve the complaint. It will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

The Registered Manager will take all reasonable steps to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant. Should this not happen, the complainant is entitled to take the matter forward to Stage 3.

Stage Three: Appeal

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 the complaint will then be considered by the Managing Director or other member of the Rockhopper Children's Services Corporate Team.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Managing Director or other member of the Rockhopper Children's Services Corporate Team will provide a formal written response within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. An extension to this limit may be agreed where necessary and the complainant kept informed of the progress. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Limedale House will take to resolve the complaint. It will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3.

Stage Four: Appeal to Kedleston Directors

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3 the complaint will then be considered by the Chief Operating Officer or another Rockhopper Children's Services Director.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Chief Operating Officer or another Rockhopper Children's Services Director will provide a formal written response within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. An extension to this limit may be agreed where necessary and the complainant kept informed of the progress. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Limedale House will take to resolve the complaint. It will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 4.

Stage Five: Complaints Panel

It will be considered by a panel consisting of at least three, suitably skilled people, who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint or in the earlier stages of the complaint process, including:

- A senior manager from Rockhopper Children's Services
- A Director of Rockhopper Children's Services
- A person, independent of the management and running of Limedale House or Rockhopper Children's Services (Limedale House's parent company) e.g. an independent visitor/advocate, social worker, officer of the local authority etc.

Members of the panel must not have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint; and written consent must be obtained from the complainant, before disclosing information to a third party.

The complainant may attend and can be accompanied at a panel if they wish.

The date, time and venue should be set at a mutually convenient time for all parties. Three possible dates will be offered (if required) to the complainant, but if these all fail to be suitable then the meeting *may* be conducted in private by the complaints panel.

For **guidance on the conduct of a complaints panel**, see Appendix 1.

The findings and recommendations of the panel will be given to the complainant, the Registered Manager, Chief Operating Officer, Rockhopper Children's Services and, where relevant, the person against whom the complaint has been made.

Urgent action will also be taken to improve practice, services and outcomes, where appropriate; and feedback will always be sought from the complainant about their experience of using Limedale House's complaints process.

Any correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be stored securely and kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection in the case of children's homes section 148 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, requests access to them.

When necessary, relevant issues will always be brought to the notice of:

- The referring/placing authority
- Parents/carers
- Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

Complaints concerning allegations of child abuse and safeguarding must be referred to children's social care and the referring authority in accordance with our 'Child Protection Policy'.

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Registered Manager will consider whether the police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible.

All complaints and their outcome are recorded in the electronic complaints log, which is kept in the homes Clearcare area and is open to inspection by officers from placing local authorities, DfE and OFSTED Inspectors.

The record will state whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure, or proceeded to a panel hearing, include details of any action taken by the setting as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld) and the outcome of any investigation.

7. Timescales for concerns and complaints

Any concern or complaint must be lodged within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents, to which it refers. Complaints that are made outside of the three months will be reviewed by the Registered Manager and any exceptions to this cut-off date will be considered dependent on the specific circumstances, grounds or nature of the complaint.

Concerns and complaints associated with safeguarding and child protection matters **will not** be subject to the three-month cut-off date, referred to above.

8. Multi-agency partnership

We work closely with social care, the police, health services and other agencies; and where another public body is investigating aspects of a complaint raised with Limedale House, consideration will be given to extending the relevant timescales or suspending the complaints process, until those public

bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Limedale House, in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure, in respect of their complaint, until such legal proceedings have concluded.

9. Withdrawal of a complaint

An individual may choose to withdraw a complaint at any stage of the process. A decision to withdraw the complaint must be made in writing and submitted to the Registered Manager.

In these circumstances, Limedale House may continue to investigate the matter, if the information provided constitutes a cause for concern.

10. Duplicate complaints

If after closing a complaint at the end of the complaints procedure, Limedale House receives a duplicate complaint about the same subject, from a different person, we will inform the new complainant that the setting has already considered that complaint and Limedale House's process is complete. The new complainant will be advised to contact one of the independent contact points identified above if they are dissatisfied with the setting's handling of the original complaint.

If the new complainant raises new aspects to the complaint that have not previously been considered, further action will be taken to ensure the additional matters are dealt with appropriately.

11. Serial and persistent complaints

We will do our best to be helpful to people who contact us with a concern, complaint or request for information.

However, if, despite all the stages of the complaints procedure being followed, a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, Limedale House will inform them that the procedure has been completed and the matter is now closed.

If the complainant contacts us again about the same matter, the communication may then be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and we may choose not to respond. A complaint will not be considered 'serial' or 'persistent' before the complainant has completed all relevant stages of our complaints procedure. Furthermore, the application of the marking 'serial' or 'persistent' relates to the subject or complaint itself, not the complainant.

For further information, on **managing serial and unreasonable complaints**, please see Appendix 2.

12. Complaints campaigns

In the event, that Limedale House becomes the focus of a campaign and receives a large volume of complaints:

- All based on the same subject; and/or

- From complainants unconnected with the school.

We may choose to respond by sending a template response to all complainants and/or publish a single response on our website.

13. Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review

The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 'Compliments and Complaints Policy' is the Registered Manager.

The designated member of staff is also responsible for ensuring that all children, staff, parents, carers and placing local authorities are aware of our policy. Additional support would also be provided to any parent or significant person, wishing to know more about the policy and procedures outlined above. A copy of this policy document is available for inspection on the premises during office hours and an electronic copy is available on request from the homes management team.

All children and staff are informed about this policy during their induction and are reminded of the procedures as necessary. The views and experiences of children, parents, carers, local authorities and staff are also sought as part of the review process through existing mechanisms for consultation and feedback. Records are kept of these enquiries as well as any associated actions.

This policy document will be reviewed and publicised in writing, at least annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant incidents or new developments in national, local and organisational policy, guidance and practice.

The proprietor, Rockhopper Children's Services, is represented by a board of executive and non-executive directors who include the Chief Executive Officer, Finance Director and Chief Operating Officer. The Board has direct responsibility for all aspects of operations in all Kedleston settings including health, safety and child protection. The Board is supported by a Senior Management Team, which comprises of the following:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Finance Director
- Chief Operating Officer
- Development and Estates Manager
- Deputy Finance Director
- Group Operations Manager
- Group HR Director
- Group IT Manager
- Group Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Lead
- Group Safeguarding Lead
- Health & Safety Manager
- Regional Children's Homes Directors
- Regional Education Directors
- Quality Director
- Strategic Partnerships Director

The proprietor, Rockhopper Children's Services, will also undertake an annual review of the Limesdale House's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, and ensure that all duties have been discharged in accordance with current legislation, regulations and statutory guidance; as well as local authority procedures and practice, including the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Partnership(s).

The proprietor stringently holds senior leaders to account for all aspects of the Limesdale House's performance through robust systems of governance, reporting and monitoring.



If you have any comments, questions, concerns or suggestions about the content of this policy document please speak to the Registered Manager. Alternatively, you can contact:

Group Safeguarding Lead, Rockhopper Children's Services, Kimberley Taylor
via email Kimberley.taylor@rockhoppercs.com or telephone **07837 348576**

Guidance on the conduct of a complaints panel**1.1 Introduction**

The aim of the complaints panel is to review how the setting has managed the complaint. This will include reviewing evidence and outcomes from previous stages and evaluating whether the setting has followed its policies and procedures. Consideration should also be given to achieving reconciliation between the setting and the complainant. However, it must be recognised that sometimes it may only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations as to future action that will satisfy the complainant that his/her complaint has been taken seriously.

If the complainant chooses to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support - this can be a relative or friend. Given that a complaints panel is not a form of legal proceedings, neither the complainant nor Registered Manager can bring legal representation.

Panel members should remember that some complainants are not used to dealing with groups of people in formal situations and may feel inhibited when speaking to the panel. Therefore, it is recommended that the chair of the complaints panel ensure that the proceedings are as informal as the situation allows.

1.2 Complaints panel procedure

The chair of the complaints panel will invite everybody into the room at the same time. He/she will facilitate introductions and clarify roles.

The chair of the complaints panel will explain to all present the purpose of the meeting, which is to:

- review evidence and outcomes from Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- evaluate whether the setting has followed its policies and procedures; and
- consider ways to achieve reconciliation between the setting and the complainant.

The chair of the complaints panel will then outline the procedure for the meeting. He/she should listen to any concerns about the procedure but has the final decision about the arrangements:

- The complainant will outline their complaint
- The Registered Manager will be given the opportunity to seek clarification from the complainant
- The panel may seek clarification from the complainant
- The Registered Manager will state the setting's case
- The complainant will be given the opportunity to seek clarification from the Registered Manager
- The panel may seek clarification from the Registered Manager
- The Registered Manager will be given the opportunity to summarise their position
- The complainant will be given the opportunity to summarise why they feel the setting has not properly addressed their complaint
- The meeting will then close. The panel will then deliberate.

The complaints panel will then arrive at its decision. This will cover:

- findings on the substantive complaint.
- any appropriate action to be taken by the setting or advice to the complainant.
- where appropriate, any recommended changes to the setting's policies or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

The decision of the complaints panel is final and binding upon the setting and the complainant.

It is the responsibility of the chair of the complaints panel to ensure that minutes of the meeting are properly recorded and distributed to all parties involved.

1.3 Consideration of the complaint in private by the complaints panel

The date, time and venue of any complaints panel should be set at a mutually convenient time for all parties. Three possible dates will be offered (if required) to the complainant, but if these all fail to be suitable then the meeting may be conducted in private by the complaints panel.

This would occur in exceptional circumstances such as failure to identify a mutually convenient date, or where the complainant declines to attend. It entails a detailed consideration of all the paperwork relating to the complaint but would not involve dialogue with the complainant or Registered Manager.

A record of the discussion and decision should be made, and a final letter sent to the complainant.

Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

Limedale House is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our home. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Limedale House defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the home, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process.
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure.
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice.
- introduces trivial, irrelevant or falsified information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on.
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their timescales.
- makes unjustified complaints about staff, who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced.
- changes the basis of the complaint, as the investigation proceeds.
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the setting's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed.
- seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- makes excessive demands on Limedale House's time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.
- uses threatening, abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence.
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with Limedale House that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the Registered Manager, will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Registered Manager will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Limedale House, causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Limesdale House.