



## **Irish Association of Youth Orchestras**

### **Policy Control Document**

To be attached preceding the front cover of all hard and soft-copies of the policy.

**Policy Name:** Complaints Policy

**Version:** 2

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Laoise O'Brien

Chairperson (Name)

Chairperson (Signature)

Allin Gray

CEO (Name)

CEO (Signature)

**Irish Association of Youth Orchestras**

**Complaints Policy**

**January 2023**

# Irish Association of Youth Orchestras Complaints Policy

## Our Commitment to You

IAYO is committed to ensuring that all our communications and dealings with young people, our members, the general public, our supporters and all who engage with us are of the highest possible standard. We listen and respond to the views of our stakeholders and service users so that we can continue to improve. IAYO welcomes feedback of all types. Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- it is as easy as possible to make a comment or complaint, where the need arises;
- we treat as a complaint any clear expression of dissatisfaction with our operations which calls for a response;
- we treat every complaint seriously, whether made by telephone, letter, email or in person;
- we deal with any complaint quickly and politely;
- we deal with complaints openly and honestly;
- we maintain confidentiality in relation to your complaint (with the exception of matters that require reporting to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as outlined below);
- we will make sure that your interactions with us in the future do not suffer as a result of having made a complaint;
- we respond accordingly – for example, with an explanation or apology where we have gotten things wrong and with information on any action taken, etc.;
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve, and monitor them at board level.

## Limits of this Policy

The Irish Association of Youth Orchestras provides for child safeguarding in line with the *Children First Act 2015* and has a *Child Safeguarding Statement* and a *Child Safeguarding Policy*, copies of both of which are available from our website and our office. As part of our commitment to safeguarding children, we have undertaken to report to Tusla, the child and family agency, and / or An Garda Síochána any complaint or disclosure that involves sexual abuse, assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child in a manner that is likely to seriously affect that child's health, development or welfare. We do not guarantee confidentiality in this respect as the welfare of children and young people supersedes our other obligations of confidentiality.

In addition, matters involving criminal actions against others by any of our on-duty staff and volunteers may be reported by us to An Garda Síochána at our discretion.

In a case where we make a report to a state agency, we will let you know at that stage how we intend to proceed.

This complaints policy is not intended for complaints made by IAYO staff in relation to their employment. A separate complaints and grievance procedure is included in the IAYO Employee Handbook. The Employee Handbook is available from the *Transparency* section of our website.

## Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about an organisation's action or lack of action or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the organisation.

## Informal Complaints

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things as soon as possible and in the easiest and most direct way. If you have a complaint, raise it with the person you are dealing with. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. However, they may need time to look into it, in which case, we commit to responding within five working days.

If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your complaint, the member of staff will draw them to our attention.

If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for your complaint to be formally investigated.

## Formal Complaints

If you wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of our work, you can contact IAYO by letter, email, telephone or in person. In the first instance, your complaint will be dealt with by our Chief Executive Officer. Please contact:

Allin Gray, Chief Executive Officer  
Irish Association of Youth Orchestras CLG  
Civic Trust House, 50 Pope's Quay, Cork. T23 R6XC  
Mobile: +353 87 960 0137  
Email: [allin@iayo.ie](mailto:allin@iayo.ie)

If the complaint is related to the Chief Executive Officer, you should contact the Chairperson of the Board. Contact details are:

Laoise O'Brien, Chairperson  
Email: [laoise.obrien@iayo.ie](mailto:laoise.obrien@iayo.ie)

## What Should You Include in Your Complaint?

- Please include your name, address, telephone number and email address.
- Please let us know your preferred contact method(s) for dealing with the complaint.
- Please let us know if you are acting on behalf of someone else.
- If you have language difficulties or any other communications requirements, please do let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you.
- Briefly describe what your complaint is about stating relevant dates and times, if applicable.
- List your specific concerns starting with the most important concern.
- Be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (for example an apology, explanation,

etc.).

- It will assist the person dealing with the complaint if extra information and / or copies of relevant documents are attached to your complaint.

## Dealing with Complaints

- If you complain in person or over the phone, we will try to resolve the issue there and then. If we cannot resolve the issue immediately, we will take details and respond within five working days to let you know how we intend to deal with the complaint.
- If we feel, at this stage, that a written complaint would be better, we'll ask you to make a complaint in that format.
- If you make a complaint by email or in writing, we will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and let you know how we intend to deal with the complaint.
- We will tell you who we have asked to investigate your complaint.
- If your complaint is straightforward, we will usually ask somebody within the organisation to look into it and get back to you. In some cases, if the complaint is serious, we may ask someone from outside the organisation to investigate.
- We will set out to you our understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we have got it right.
- If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are happy to accept this.
- We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority of complaints within 30 working days.
- If your complaint is more complex we will:
  - let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate
  - tell you how long we expect it to take.
  - give you regular updates on any progress made (at least every 20 working days).
- The person who is investigating your concerns will aim first to establish the facts.
- The extent of this investigation will depend on how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are.
- In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.
- In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your complaint. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.
- When investigating your complaint, we will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your complaint.
- If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any available guidance relating to the complaint.
- All complaints will be logged in our complaints register and tracked until they are resolved.

## Outcome

- If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. This could be by letter or email or by alternate means if agreed between us.
- If necessary, we will produce a longer report.
- We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.
- If we find that we got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened.
- If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.
- If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

## Putting Things Right

If we didn't do something well, we will aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part we will try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right.

## What happens if the complaint is not resolved?

If you are not happy with our response, you are invited to contact the Chairperson of the board who will ensure that your appeal is considered at Board level. They will respond within two weeks of this consideration by Board members. Contact details are provided above.

## Acting on Results

- We take your complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made.
- Our board considers a summary of all complaints annually as well as details of any serious complaints as and when they happen.
- Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by.
- We will let you know when changes we have promised have been made.
- We will do everything we can to put things right and will review our procedures where necessary to stop problems happening again.

## What We Expect from You

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined. We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected.

However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

The Irish Association of Youth Orchestras CLG (IAYO) is the all-Ireland resource organisation for youth orchestras.

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Directors: Laoise O'Brien (Chairperson), Wendy Arlow (Vice-chairperson), Carol Daly, Liam Daly (Treasurer), Anne Gannon, Martin McGinley, Mona McMahon, Denise Ní Dhuibhir, Delphine Picovici.

Staff: Allin Gray (CEO), Sinéad Ryan (Programmes Manager), Rachel Dunne Lambe (Youth Participation Officer), Jack Mahony (Administrator), Edel Carmody (Marketing and Communications Officer).

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