

# Charlotte's Forest School



## Complaints Policy & Procedure

## Complaints Policy

### 1. Overview

1.1 Charlotte's Forest School is committed to providing an open and accountable quality service for all. One way we continue to improve is by listening and responding to all complaints, by rectifying errors and taking whatever steps possible to prevent further occurrences.

1.2 Charlotte's Forest School aims to ensure that:

- a) Making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- b) We deal with complaints promptly, politely, fairly, factually and confidentially.
- c) We deal with complaints as an expression of dissatisfaction with our service that requires prompt action or response.
- d) We respond in the correct and proper way, with explanation, apology or information as appropriate.
- e) We review and learn from complaints thereby improving our service.

1.3 We recognise that many concerns need to be raised informally and dealt with quickly by course tutors. However, if concerns cannot be resolved informally, immediately or the matter is serious then the formal complaints policy should be followed.

1.4 Complaints regarding teaching, assessment, recording and quality assurance are initially handled by Charlotte's Forest School who are an ITC First approved Centre offering ITC qualifications.

1.5 After exhausting Charlotte's Forest School procedures, if you are dissatisfied with a decision made or procedures followed by Charlotte's Forest School you can then complain to ITC First, our Awarding Organisation/Body.

### 2. A complaint or an appeal

2.1 An appeal occurs when a judgement decision has been made. E.g. Candidates may appeal assessment decisions.

2.2 Any individual or organisation that is affected by an assessment decision made by Charlotte's Forest School or ITC First is eligible to take advantage of the appeals process.

2.3 The ITC First Appeals Policy can be found on the policies/procedures page of the ITC website. The Charlotte's Forest School Appeals Policy may be found on the Charlotte's Forest School website ([www.charlotteswood.co.uk](http://www.charlotteswood.co.uk)) or can be applied for directly.

### 3. Formal complaints to Charlotte's Forest School

3.1 This formal complaint procedure is intended to ensure all complaints are handled fairly and consistently.

3.2 A formal complaint should be instigated if informal methods do not resolve the concern.

3.3 Charlotte's Forest School will:

- a) Respond to the formal complaint in writing within 5 working days, stating the time period for a considered response [15 working days].
- b) Deal reasonably and sensitively to the complaint.
- c) Take action where appropriate.

3.4 The complainant should:

- a) Complain in writing
- b) Use the word 'complaint' to avoid any misinterpretation of any comment, or other statements or correspondence received.
- c) Raise concerns and explain clearly all details, consequences as a result and the form of redress or change in operations that are sought.
- d) Complain to Charlotte's Forest School within 8 weeks of the occurrence.

3.5 Charlotte's Forest School will investigate the subject matter of the complaint and reply in writing within 15 working days.

3.6 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response then they can write directly to Charlotte's Forest School for review and if still not satisfied can complain to ITC Awards Manager who will follow ITC published procedures for handling complaints.

3.7 If not satisfied with ITC First published procedures then a complaint can be escalated to the external regulators, Ofqual or SQA (if enrolled on an SQA Accredited qualification) after exhausting ITC First complaints procedure.

3.8 **SQA Complaints ONLY.** If the complaint has been escalated to SQA Accreditation and the candidate is not satisfied with SQA Accreditation complaint procedures the complaint can be ultimately raised to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

3.8 Charlotte's Forest School will log any complaints received including the response and actions taken. These will be reviewed at the time of the complaints and annually for trends and preventative actions required – Refer Appendix 1.

