



IRISH FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION (IFCA)

Complaints Policy

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IFCA Complaints Policy

This complaints policy outlines the steps IFCA will follow to handle complaints. It reflects IFCA's commitment to transparency, fairness, and respect for all parties involved.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to complaints concerning breaches of IFCA's Code of Conduct, or other issues affecting the charity's operations, reputation, or members. Complaints that fall outside the scope of this policy (e.g., legal matters, internal staff complaints) will be redirected appropriately.

We are an open and transparent organisation and welcome all feedback. Every person is entitled to submit a complaint. That complaint will be reviewed by reference to the rules and policies that apply and govern IFCA.

2. How to Make a Complaint

1. **Submission:** Complaints must be submitted in writing (email or letter) to the designated complaints officer – Feedback@ifca.ie or IFCA, Synergy Centre, TU Dublin Campus, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 A386. You can also be supported to put this in writing. Please call our office on 01 459 9474 and ask to speak with the complaints officer.
 2. **Required Information:** Complaints should include:
 - A detailed description of the issue.
 - Names of those involved.
 - Dates and locations (if applicable).
 - Any supporting evidence (e.g., emails, documents).
 3. **Confidentiality:** All complaints will be treated confidentially, with details shared only as necessary to resolve the matter.
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3. Initial Handling of the Complaint

1. **Acknowledgment:**
 - IFCA will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days of receiving it.
 2. **Preliminary Review:**
 - The complaint will be reviewed reasonably promptly to determine if it falls within the scope of this procedure.
 - If the complaint is outside the scope, the complainant will be informed and directed to the appropriate process.
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4. Investigation

1. Appointment of Investigator:

- An investigator (internal or external) will be appointed to handle the matter reasonably promptly.

2. Fact-Finding:

- The investigator will gather all relevant information, including statements from the complainant, the respondent (if any), and relevant witnesses.

3. Right to Respond:

- Respondents will be informed of a complaint and given the opportunity to respond in writing reasonably promptly.

4. Interim Measures (if necessary):

- In cases of serious allegations, temporary measures (e.g., suspension of privileges) may be implemented to protect IFCA or its members during the investigation.
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5. Decision and Resolution

1. Report and Findings:

- The investigator will prepare a report summarising the findings and recommendations reasonably promptly after concluding the investigation.
- This report will be reviewed by the complaints officer. Where the complaints officer has completed the investigation, the report will be reviewed by the CEO.

2. Outcome Notification:

- Relevant parties will be appropriately informed of the outcome reasonably promptly after the investigation's conclusion.
 - Possible outcomes may include:
 - No action (if the complaint is unfounded).
 - A formal written warning
 - Mandatory corrective measures (e.g., a formal apology, training).
 - Escalation to the Board of Directors for further action.
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6. Escalation to the Board of Directors

1. Board Review:

- If the complaint involves grave misconduct or repeated breaches, the matter will be referred to the IFCA Board of Directors reasonably promptly after the investigation.
- The Board will decide on appropriate sanctions, which may include, in extreme circumstances, suspension or withdrawal of membership.

2. Decision Communication:

- The Board's decision will be communicated to all parties reasonably promptly after the Board's meeting.
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7. Appeals Process

1. Right to Appeal:

- Either party may appeal the decision by submitting a written appeal to the Chairperson of the Board within one month of receiving the decision.

2. Final Decision:

- The appeal will be reviewed by a panel appointed by the Board, whose decision will be communicated reasonably promptly and will be final.
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8. Record-Keeping

- IFCA will maintain a confidential record of all complaints, investigations, and outcomes for a minimum of **6 years**, in compliance with data protection laws.
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9. Timeframes

While IFCA aims to handle complaints reasonably promptly, delays may occur due to the complexity of certain cases. In such instances, parties will be informed of any changes and provided with revised timelines.

10. Policy Review

This complaints procedure will be reviewed every 3 years by the Board to ensure it remains effective, fair, and compliant with relevant laws and regulations.