

# **Friends of Evington Grievance Procedure Policy**

**Policy:** Friends of Evington Grievance Procedure

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This procedure explains how complaints can be raised with Friends of Evington and if the complaint becomes formal, the steps Friends of Evington will commit to, as good practice, to follow.

1.2 Friends of Evington’s constitution is available to view on-line at [www.evingtonecho.uk](http://www.evingtonecho.uk) or by requesting a copy. We summarise our charitable objects (aims) within our vision as follows:

1.3 Vision: Friends of Evington seeks to inspire a healthy community in Evington through bringing environmental and educational projects to life, providing solutions that benefit local people and protect the planet.

## **2. Purpose of the Policy**

Friends of Evington aims to provide the best possible advice, support, and services to their individual and group members in Evington and the surrounding area. The Board of Trustees of Friends of Evington are accountable to the Charity Commission. Occasionally, an individual member or member group may feel s/he has not had the best possible service that Friends of Evington aim to provide. It is important that any member wishing to make a complaint knows how to do so. Friends of Evington Board of Trustees will respond to a complaint within reasonable time limits and in a courteous and efficient way. They will take members complaints seriously and the circumstances investigated, and necessary corrective action undertaken.

Friends of Evington is committed to dealing with grievances fairly, consistently and without unreasonable delay. This policy sets out the way in which a volunteer member should make any complaints they have about volunteering -related matters and the way in which the Friends of Evington will resolve these complaints. This policy and procedure can be changed by Friends of Evington at any time. If anybody has any queries about this policy and procedure they should contact a senior person on the Board of Trustees.

### **3. Primary Principles**

3.1 Grievances will be dealt with confidentially so far as reasonably possible, and the complainant must keep information learnt during the process confidential.

3.2 The purpose of a grievance of appeal meeting is for the complainant to explain their grievance and how they think that it should be resolved using evidence available to make representations, allowing the Friends of Evington's representative to come to a decision.

3.3 Complainants (and when applicable, Friends of Evington trustees) will not be subjected to a detriment for raising a grievance in good faith, even if the grievance is not upheld. However, the complainant should not use this policy to dispute any decision and sanction (where applicable) resulting from a disciplinary investigation/hearing.

3.4 Volunteers and members will not normally be suspended during the grievance process, but the Friends of Evington reserves the right to suspend the complainant, if, in their discretion, this is helpful and reasonable.

3.5 The volunteer member has the right to appeal any decision made about a grievance as set out in the appeals section of this policy and procedure.

3.6 The Friends of Evington's representative processes personal data collected during informal discussions and the formal grievance procedure in accordance with its Data Protection Policy. In particular, data collected as part of informal discussions and the grievance procedure is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of responding to the grievance or conducting the grievance procedure.

3.7 Inappropriate access or disclosure of the Volunteer member's data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Friends of Evington's Data Protection Policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be investigated and, if appropriate, attract sanctions (which may include being removed from their position with Friends of Evington).

### **4. Informal Discussion**

1.1 The Friends of Evington promotes communication between members and wherever possible, the complainant should try to resolve any grievance by firstly talking about it informally with another volunteer or trustee to try and agree a solution.

1.2 If the grievance is too serious, if the complainant or Friends of Evington representative think it is not appropriate in the circumstances to deal with the grievance informally, or if discussing the grievance informally does not work, the volunteer's grievance will be dealt with formally.

1.3 If the Friends of Evington's representative thinks that an investigatory interview would be helpful at any stage during the grievance process before a formal meeting is held or continued, the Friends of Evington may take statements from the complainant, respondent or witnesses or review documents at the Friends of Evington's representative's discretion.

1.4 No decision will be taken until after a grievance hearing has been held. A volunteer does not have the right to bring a companion to an investigative interview. However the Friends of Evington's representative may allow the volunteer to bring a companion who must be a Friend of Evington volunteer or member at their absolute discretion. The Friends of Evington's representative may exceptionally allow a companion from an affiliated group at their discretion.

## **5. Reconciliation**

Any members who are dissatisfied with any aspect of the work of Friends of Evington should contact the Chair of Friends of Evington in the first instance. The chair will appoint a suitable trustee who will seek to satisfy any complaint by conciliation and clarification of the issues involved. Hopefully, most problems can be satisfied by this informal process. The appointed trustee will normally reply to the complainant within fourteen days of receipt of the complaint if this is possible. If this is not possible, the appointed trustee will notify the complainant, with an expected timescale for the reply. If the person making the complaint is not satisfied by the result of the above informal process, they should use the following more formal procedures.

## **6. Formal Complaints Procedure**

### **6.1 Stage 1 - Statement of Grievance**

(a) To raise the matter formally, the Friends of Evington's representative should write to the Board of Trustees (Chair or Secretary) setting out the facts of the grievance, avoiding insulting or abusive language and trying to give specific examples of the complaint, copies of documents, names of witnesses and dates where possible.

(b) Where an employee's grievance is against the Chair and Secretary of the Board of Trustees, the volunteer should write to someone else on the Board of Trustees who is not the subject of the grievance.

## **6.2 Stage 2 - Grievance Meeting**

(c) Normally, within seven days, the Friends of Evington's representative will usually hold the meeting (unless they are the subject of the grievance, or it is not reasonably practicable for the Friends of Evington's representative to hold the meeting). If it is not possible to hold a meeting within seven days, the Friends of Evington's representative will notify the complainant with an expected timescale.

(d) The Friends of Evington's representative will usually hold the meeting (unless they are the subject of the grievance, or it is not reasonably practicable for the Friends of Evington's representative to hold the meeting).

(e) Seven days' notice of the meeting will usually be provided to the complainant and they will be informed, at the Friends of Evington's representative's discretion, if they can be accompanied by a companion and whether they will require any special adjustments to be made for their or their companion's attendance. These adjustments are to be made for the complainant or their companion's attendance, at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting.

(f) The complainant should notify the Friends of Evington's representative of the identity of the companion (or any change in their choice of companion) and whether they will require any special adjustments to be made for their or their companion's attendance, at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting.

(g) The Friends of Evington encourages the complainant to bring their choice of colleague to formal meetings under this procedure, but the volunteer should bear in mind how practical it is for their choice of companion to attend and consider if there is a suitable and available individual who is geographically close to where the meeting is to be held, rather than first considering an individual geographically based further away.

(h) The role of the companion in a formal meeting is to make notes, confer with the complainant and, if the complainant requests it, to address the hearing to state the complainant's case and respond to any views expressed at the meeting. The companion does not have the right to answer questions or address the hearing if the complainant does not request this and must not prevent the Friends of Evington's representative from explaining the case.

(i) If the complainant or their companion is unable to attend the meeting at the time, date and place specified by the Friends of Evington's representative, they must notify the chair of the meeting as soon as possible in writing.

(j) Except in the case of an emergency, this should be at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting and the complainant should agree a time when all parties will be available within seven days of the original proposed meeting.

(k) Those involved must make every effort to attend any scheduled meetings under this procedure. If you are unable to attend more than two scheduled meetings, the Friends of Evington's representative reserves the right to decide about your grievance using available evidence, but in your absence.

(l) If the Friends of Evington or the complainant will be referring to any documentation during the formal meeting, this should be sent to the other party at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting, so that they have a reasonable chance to prepare.

(m) The Friends of Evington's representative may, in its absolute discretion, adjourn a meeting to carry out further investigations, after which the meeting will usually reconvene. After the meeting, the Friends of Evington's representative will give the volunteer a decision in writing, normally within 48 hours. If this is not possible, the complainant will be notified with an expected timescale for the response.

### **6.3 Stage 3 - Appeal**

(n) If the complainant is unhappy with the Friends of Evington's representative's decision and they wish to appeal, they should write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees within seven days of the date of the decision giving reasons why they disagree with the decision and providing any new evidence they seek to rely on.

(o) The complainant will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within 14 days of the Friends of Evington receiving the complainant's letter of appeal. If this is not possible, the complainant will be notified with an expected timescale for the meeting to be arranged.

(p) The Chair of the Board of Trustees will appoint an impartial trustee to hear the appeal. If this is not possible, an independent HR advisor, who has not been part of the process until the appeal stage, may be exceptionally appointed to hear the appeal and recommend the outcome.

However, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will make a final decision on the outcome of the appeal. The Complainant's appeal will either be a review of the grievance decision made or a complete rehearing at the Friends of Evington's discretion. The right to be accompanied to the appeal meeting is the same as set out in Stage Two above.

(q) After the meeting, the complainant will be given a decision, normally within 48 hours. If this is not possible, the complainant will be notified with an expected timescale for the response. The appeal decision is final and there is no further right to appeal.

# GRIEVANCE FORM FOR FRIENDS OF EVINGTON

**This form was ratified by the previous charity**

FIRST NAME: ..... SURNAME:.....

ADDRESS .....

POST CODE: ..... TEL/MOBILE NO: ..... E-MAIL: .....

STATUS IN RELATION TO FRIENDS OF EVINGTON:

☐ Member   ☐ Member and Trustee   ☐ Volunteer   ☐ Other, please explain .....

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE INCLUDING DATE AND ANY WITNESSES:

[illegible]

PROPOSED SOLUTION TO GRIEVANCE:

.....

.....

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.....

PLEASE STATE POLICIES, PROCEDURES OR GUIDELINES THAT YOU FEEL HAVE BEEN VIOLATED:

.....

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.....

Please retain a copy of this form for your records. The signature below indicates you are filing a grievance and any information on this form is truthful.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Received by .....Date: .....

## **8. Monitoring and Reporting**

All complaints and feedback to Friends of Evington will be fully recorded and a report made to the Trustee Board on any complaints or grievances dealt with via this procedure. A written record will be retained of all complaints.