

Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

Rites for Girls is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all employees, facilitators, mentors, affiliates and volunteers. This procedure outlines the steps for raising complaints and whistleblowing concerns, ensuring they are addressed promptly and fairly.

Complaints Procedure

1. Informal Resolution

Step 1: If you have a complaint, try to resolve the issue informally by discussing it directly with the person(s) involved. Many issues can be resolved quickly through open and respectful communication.

2. Formal Complaint

Step 2: If the issue cannot be resolved informally or you feel uncomfortable addressing it directly, submit a formal complaint. To do this:

- **Write a Complaint:** Provide a detailed written account of the complaint, including the date, time, location, individuals involved, and any other relevant information.
- **Submit the Complaint:** Send the written complaint to Kim McCabe via email or a sealed envelope marked “Confidential.”

Step 3: Acknowledgement

- **Acknowledgement:** You will receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within 5 working days, confirming receipt and outlining the next steps.

Step 4: Investigation

- **Investigation:** An impartial investigator will be appointed to look into the complaint. This process may involve interviews with the complainant, the subject of the complaint, and any witnesses.
- **Confidentiality:** All information will be handled confidentially and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Step 5: Resolution

- **Resolution:** The investigator will aim to resolve the complaint within 20 working days. You will receive a written response detailing the findings and any actions to be taken.

Step 6: Appeal

- **Appeal:** If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can appeal in writing within 10 working days of receiving the resolution. The appeal will be reviewed by a different senior staff member, and you will receive a final decision within 20 working days.

Whistleblowing Procedure

1. Raising a Concern

Step 1: If you have a concern about wrongdoing, such as illegal activities, abuse, or any other misconduct within Rites for Girls, you can raise it without fear of reprisal.

- **Report the Concern:** Write a detailed account of your concern, including relevant dates, times, locations, and individuals involved.
- **Submit the Report:** Send the written report to Kim McCabe via email or a sealed envelope marked “Confidential.”

2. Acknowledgement

- **Acknowledgement:** You will receive an acknowledgement of your report within 5 working days, confirming receipt and outlining the next steps.

3. Investigation

- **Investigation:** An impartial investigator will be appointed to look into the concern. This process may involve interviews with the whistleblower, the subject of the concern, and any witnesses.
- **Confidentiality:** All information will be handled confidentially and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

4. Resolution

- **Resolution:** The investigator will aim to resolve the concern within 20 working days. You will receive a written response detailing the findings and any actions to be taken.

5. Protection

- **Protection:** Rites for Girls is committed to protecting whistleblowers from retaliation. Any form of retaliation against someone who raises a concern in good faith will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Rites for Girls values feedback and concerns as opportunities to improve our services and maintain a high standard of safety and integrity. We encourage open communication and are committed to addressing all complaints and whistleblowing reports fairly and promptly.

Approved by:

Kim McCabe, Founder Director

This policy was last reviewed: February 2025