



IGG Complaints Policy

Effective from: September 2025
Designated person responsible: Safeguarding Officer
Overall responsibility: IGG Board
To be reviewed: September 2028

Amanda O'Sullivan	02/07/2025	V1

Complaints Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how we manage, address and learn from complaints to ensure that Irish Girl Guides (IGG) handles complaints fairly, efficiently, and effectively.

This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and addressed in a professional manner and that improvements are made as a result of complaints.

This policy is for:

- Volunteers, adult members, youth members and staff
- Parents /Guardians of youth members
- Prospective members
- General public including prospective members, supporters and third parties that IGG activities affect

We use this policy and the complaints procedures to deal with all complaints received at any level of guiding.

It covers complaints about:

- The standard of the experience received from IGG
- The behaviour of anyone who plays a part in delivering IGG programme and services
- IGG Policies, communications and resources

We treat information we receive as part of complaints sensitively and only share information about a complaint with people who need to know.

2. Policy Statement

Irish Girl Guides is committed to dealing and resolving all complaints fairly, constructively, consistently and in good time.

We will make sure our process is as clear and supportive as possible for everyone and we are committed to resolving all complaints fairly, speedily and in a way which seeks a reasonable resolution.

We aim to make sure all complaints are taken seriously and that we learn from them where we can to make guiding even more enjoyable and accessible to everyone.

3. Definitions

- Complaint – a concern brought to IGG about a specific situation, event, volunteer, youth member or staff member. It doesn't include any concerns raised about IGG as a whole or the services we provide.
- Complainant – The person who submits the complaint
- Adult volunteers – anyone aged over 18 years who gives their time to IGG without being paid. This includes volunteers working directly with girls and volunteers with

- no direct contact with girls.
- Youth member – anyone who is a Ladybird, Brownies, Guide or Senior Branch member under 18 years.
- Member – Youth or adult volunteer.
- Acting in good faith – when you make a complaint, you must believe it's substantially true. You mustn't act maliciously; make allegations you know are false or seek any personal gain.
- Third party – someone affected by IGG activities for example a partner organisation, the owner of a venue used by IGG members, or the public.
- Informal process – discussing with relevant people and coming to a resolution
- Formal process – initiating the formal process by completion of the Complaints form and the appointment of a reporting officer
- Reporting Officer – a person appointed by IGG and trained for this role.
- Safeguarding Officer – staff member responsible for managing the Complaints Process and Procedures.

4. Procedures and Guidelines

We encourage that a complaint or issue is raised as soon as possible so that we can begin to address it in good time.

Some concerns are best dealt with informally. But if you want to make a formal complaint, please see IGG Complaint procedures and complete the online complaints form.

IGG will handle all information sensitively and in accordance with current data protection legislation.

Irish Girl Guides will refuse a complaint which is 'unreasonable' – in that it is abusive, frivolous, vexatious, or malicious. Repetitive discussions about closed complaints will not be engaged with. Anonymous complaints will only be considered where there is sufficient information provided to enable IGG to investigate. Where there is not sufficient information provided, IGG may decide to take no further action but keep a record of the complaint in case it becomes clear that action is required at a later date.

Anonymous complaints or complaints made under false names raise both practical problems and issues concerning fairness. However, anonymous complaints should not be ignored, and organisations should make every effort to address the complaints raised and try to resolve them appropriately.

There may be a good reason why the complaint is made on an anonymous basis, for example, if there was a concern by the complainant that if their identity were revealed it could lead to negative consequences for their health or well-being.

It may be the case that the complaint can be properly investigated either by talking to a third-party witness, or with evidence provided with the complaint, and where there is no need for further contact with the anonymous complainant.

Any complaint involving a minor should be investigated and handled in a confidential manner according to the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Person Policy.

A record of all complaints should be kept in the organisation.

Following the outcome of a complaint you can ask for an appeal using our Appeals process. There is also a Review process available following the resolution of a complaint to review the complaints process.

A complaint can be made directly:

- at local level to a Unit Leader or a Commissioner
- at national level through an online Complaints Form available on the website
- If the complaint is about a member of staff, their line manager should be contacted directly

Where a complaint is received, we will try to resolve the issue there and then. If this is not possible, informal or formal complaints procedures will be initiated.

5. Compliance and Consequences

We expect anyone making a complaint to follow our complaints procedure, to do so in good faith and to do so within a reasonable time frame.

We expect that anyone handling a complaint will:

- Manage the complaint promptly
- Treat it seriously and learn from it
- Handle all information sensitively
- Respect the anonymity of the person making the complaint, if they've asked to stay anonymous
- Make a report where there is evidence to suggest a volunteer has breached an IGG policy or code of conduct.

If there are Safeguarding concerns, you must follow the Safeguarding Policy and procedures to report a concern.

We won't investigate the same complaint twice, but if someone else raises the same complaint we will respond. If there is new evidence or information to consider you can make an appeal using the Appeals and Review process.

For grievances (members of staff only) staff should follow the Grievance procedure as outlined in the *IGG Staff Handbook*.

If any volunteer experiences inappropriate behaviours from a parent or guardian of a young member, the volunteer should complete the Complaints Form.

On an annual basis the Board of Irish Girl Guides reviews formal complaints received without identifying individuals involved