

## SMS Complaints Policy

1. The aim of the policy is to ensure that the complaints process is flexible and responsive to the needs of individual complaints. The policy seeks to ensure that:
  - a. members who complain are listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy.
  - b. members will never be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint.
  - c. complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly, honestly and openly.
  - d. apologies are given as appropriate.
  - e. complaints handling will comply with confidentiality and data protection policies.
  - f. The existence of the policy is publicised so that SMS members and members of the public know how to make a complaint.
2. Complaints may be made by members, their families or a representative of a member, or members of the public.
3. The Salisbury Musical Society will not be able to deal with an issue through the complaints process if:
  - a. a complaint relates to a legal matter that is already being dealt with by a solicitor
  - b. the complainant is anonymous, unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate the complaint.
4. Members should be encouraged to raise minor complaints informally in the first instance, preferably verbally, as this can lead to better understanding and very often to a quick resolution of the issue.
5. If the complaint cannot be solved quickly or if the complaint is more serious, it should be made in writing. A written complaint should include sufficient detail to enable the Society to investigate.
6. Complaints should be made to the Society Secretary in the first instance, who will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 7 working days. This acknowledgement will indicate the next course of action and the anticipated timescale. The Society will seek to resolve the complaint as a matter of urgency. If the complaint relates to the Chairman or the Secretary another Committee Member of the Society will process the complaint.
7. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, they have 14 working days to submit a written appeal, and the appeal will be dealt with by the Society Chairman who will convene a special meeting within 14 working days of the appeal being submitted.
8. The Society Chairman will respond in writing to the complainant within 7 working days of the special meeting, advising of the action taken to resolve the complaint.
9. If a complaint is pursued unreasonably or where a complainant's actions or behaviours are deemed to be unreasonable, the Salisbury Musical Society reserves the right to close the complaint. A complainant who displays threatening or abusive behaviour or language (whether verbal or written), that causes other SMS members, committee members or Society officers to feel threatened or abused, and/or who continues to contact the Society with unreasonable demands during/following a complaint investigation, may have their membership terminated.
10. In cases where Society officers consider a complainant is being unreasonable and overly persistent and decide to bring the complaint to an end, they will inform the complainant of their reasons.