

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND POLICY**

At Intuition School we work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents, carers and professionals. Our aim is to deal with issues and problems before they become a 'complaint'.

There is a clear procedure to follow if a complaint needs to be made. The steps to follow and their outcome are outlined in this document:

### **Stage1. Informal expression of concern made to the school**

In the first instance, the matter should be discussed with the young person's Tutor. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way with apologies where necessary. There is no doubt that if a concern is shared with the Tutor they can either reassure worried parents or devise steps together to take to address the concern. They will always be taken seriously, and due consideration given to a mutually agreeable resolution. Members of the school's senior leadership may be involved at this stage.

### **Stage 2. Discussion and investigating**

If the matter has not been resolved and needs further investigation parents must make an appointment with the Tutor. The Tutor will need time to fully investigate the matter and will respond within 7 school days.

### **Stage 3. Principal**

Complaints rarely reach this formal level, but should you need to you should make a formal complaint to the Principal.

Within 10 school days of the issue a written complaint should be addressed to the Principal and marked "private and confidential". The letter should say why you remain unhappy and what you wish to see happen. The Principal will let you know when your complaint is to be considered. If a meeting with you and others involved is considered necessary, you will be given adequate notice to prepare. You will be informed of the outcome of the Principal's investigation and decision on what further action will be taken within 10 school days.

### **Stage 4. Governors**

You may take your complaint to the school Governors within 2 months of the Principal's Response.

If the complaint is not resolved, and all previous stages have been explored, a parent may make representation to the Governors. A letter addressed to the Chair of Governors marked "Private and Confidential" can be left at the school office. If the Governors consider that the complaint warrants further investigation they may ask you to explain your case in person before a specially appointed panel. However, it is also possible that, following investigation, they may decide without needing you to appear. A decision will be provided within 15 days where possible.

### **Stage 5. Further Representation**

If you remain dissatisfied, you may make further representations.

You may approach the Secretary of State for Education or the \*Ombudsman if you are unhappy with the process or outcome. This would normally only be appropriate if you believe that the school, the Governing body and the LEA have acted illegally or arbitrarily.

\* Please note the Ombudsman does not investigate internal school management

If parents have a complaint about the Principal, they should first make an informal approach to the Chair of the Governors (as at stage 4 above) who is obliged to investigate it. The Chair will do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined above.

If, despite all stages of this policy being followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied they are not entitled to reopen the same issue. In such cases the Chair of Governors is able to inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

If an anonymous complaint is received it will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances or serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the school might consider it appropriate to contact outside agencies.

### **Investigating complaints**

The person investigating the complaint will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if further information is required
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
- Conduct any interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- Complete all necessary notes.

### **Resolving Complaints**

At each stage in the complaint schools and complainant will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better\*
- Assurance that the event that was the basis of the complaint will not recur
- Explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again. Details of any disciplinary procedures that have taken place as a result of the complaint will not be shared.
- An undertaking to review school policy or procedure in light of the complaint

- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld
  - An explanation that, following investigation, the evidence does not substantiate the concern
- \*An admission that the school could have handled things better is not the same as an admission of negligence

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Governors will monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Principal will log all stage 2 complaints received by the school and record how they were resolved. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting a standard inspection of a non-association independent school requests access to them.

The Governors of Intuition School review this policy as necessary.