

## **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 student's Keyworker. 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 Keyworker 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.

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

If the matter has not been resolved and needs further investigation parents may request that the Keyworker fully investigates the matter further involving other members of staff. Feedback from the investigation will be given to parents within 7 school days. Members of the school's leadership team may also be involved at this stage.

### **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" and left in the school office or sent via email to [intuition.anna@diamond-families.org.uk](mailto:intuition.anna@diamond-families.org.uk). 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 of the letter being received.

### **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 from your letter that the complaint warrants further investigation they may ask you to explain your case in person before a specially appointed panel. who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The panel will include the proprietor and two members of the Governors plus an impartial member

of the Local Authority. The parents/ carers are welcomed to the panel if they so should wish and can chose to be accompanied and supported. This could be by advocacy teams such as Parent Partnership. However, it is also possible that, following investigation, they may make a decision without needing you to appear. A decision will be provided within 15 days where possible. The panel will provide a report of its findings and recommendations. These will then be provided to the complainant and where relevant the person who the complaint is about. These are then available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Principal.

### **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.

	<b>September 2019 - July 2020</b>	<b>September 2020 - July 2021</b>	<b>September 2021 - July 2022</b>
<b>Number of formal written complaints</b>	0	0	0

### **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 – whether resolved or proceeded to a panel hearing and action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld). 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.

<b>Stage 2 Parents/Carers request further investigation by the Keyworker and staff involved {Response in 7 days}</b>	←Unresolved Stage 1 Resolved→	<b>No further action</b>
<b>Stage 3 Written complaint to</b>	←Unresolved Stage 2 Resolved→	<b>No further action</b>

<b>Principal on paper or via email. {Response in 10 days}</b>		
<b>Stage 4 Within 2 months of the Principal's response Parents can make representation to the Governors in writing</b>	<b>←Unresolved Stage 3 Resolved→</b>	<b>No further action</b>
<b>Stage 5 Parents to be heard by a Panel including one independent representative separate from the management and governance of the school {response within 15 days of the Panel}</b>	<b>←Unresolved Stage 4 Resolved→</b>	<b>No further action</b>
<b>Further representation to the Secretary of State for Education/ Ombudsman if parents/carers believe the school is acting illegally</b>	<b>←Unresolved Stage 5 Resolved→</b>	<b>No further action</b>
<b>Governors will write to the complainant saying to complaint cannot be taken further or reopened</b>	<b>←Still unresolved</b>	

#### Useful Links

<http://parentalengagement.co.uk/getting-it-right-for-ofsted/4574813099>

<https://www.sendiass-stoke.co.uk/>

<https://stoke-on-trent.cylex-uk.co.uk/company/stoke-on-trent-parent-partnership-14633659.html>