

Elmfield

Rudolf Steiner

School

Initial Steps for Raising a Concern or Grievance

We welcome and value feedback in order to learn and improve!

This procedure is available to parents, prospective parents, members of staff, students aged 16 or over, or other people affected by the life of the School.

Informal Stage

If you have a concern about any aspect of the School, you are warmly encouraged to speak to the person directly responsible for the subject of your concern. We have found that direct communication is often the most constructive way of resolving issues. This would normally be

- for concerns about teaching or other educational aspects, your child's class teacher or guardian
- for concerns about general administrative or financial aspects, the school administrator.

It is recognised however that there are circumstances in which a direct approach may not be a possible or appropriate course of action. In this case please contact the School's Designated Person (DP), who will facilitate a meeting with the member of staff involved. Should the concern relate to the DP, then please contact the School's Educational Co-ordinator. The DP carries responsibility on behalf of the school to ensure that correct procedure is followed throughout the process of any complaint

Members of staff are asked to record the reason for any concern as well as any actions identified during the conversation. Where this is agreed to be unnecessary, the note will state the nature of the concern and 'no further action required'. You will be asked to sign the note which will be filed for review by the School's DP.

If the concerns remain, the DP, at your request, will arrange a further facilitated meeting with a neutral note-taker to help explore your concern further.

Mediation

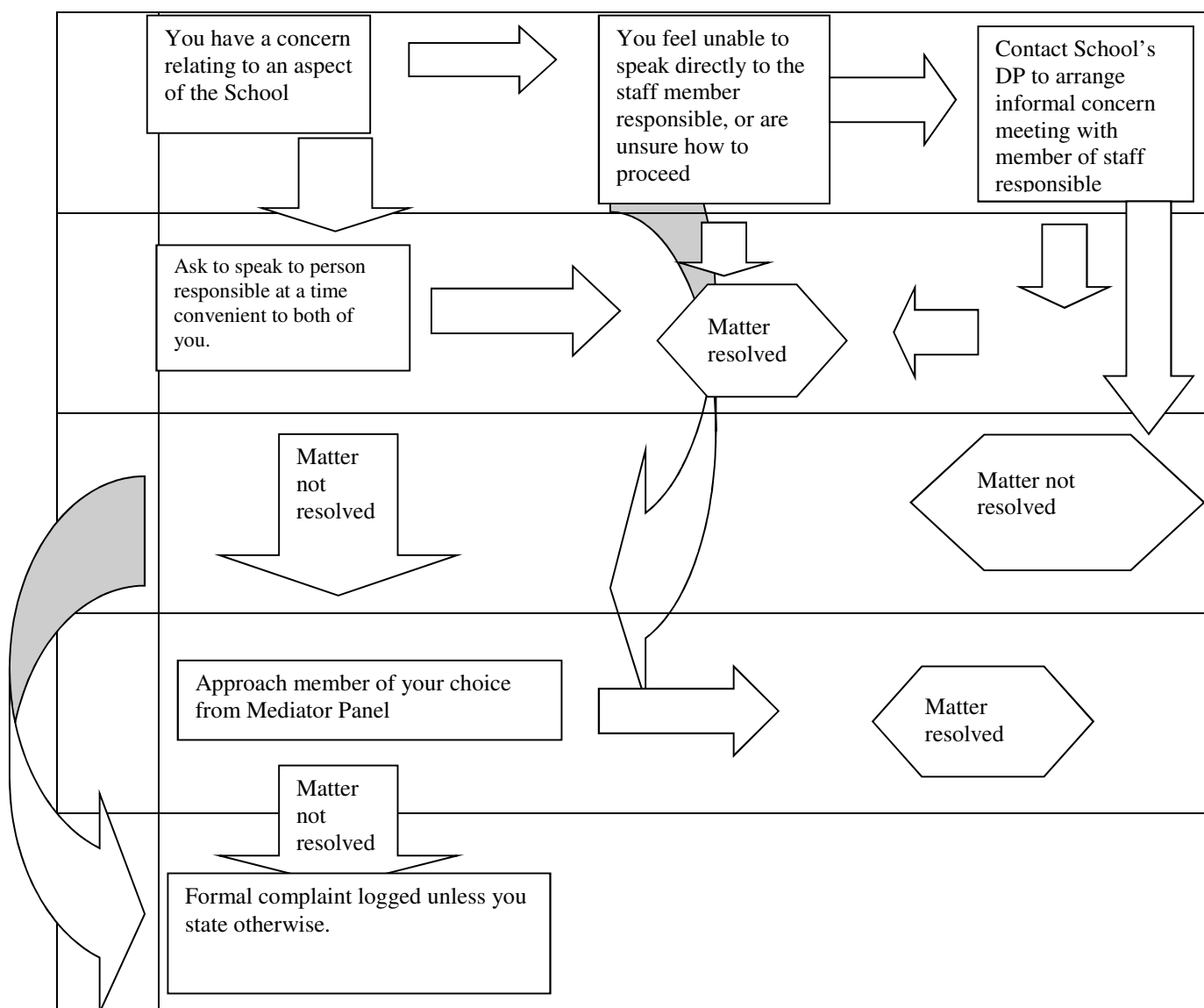
If the concern is complex, or cannot be resolved in this way, we offer the services of independent mediators, subject to the availability of suitably qualified individuals. In consultation with the DP, the mediators aim to provide a secure, confidential process intended to assist good communication and to help find appropriate resolution. Mediation can take place when all those involved agree to it.

Mediators will not retain notes of matters discussed during the process: these will be securely disposed of once the mediation process is complete. However agreed outcomes will be recorded to ensure that they can be followed up.

We would not wish concerns to be prolonged and so would aim for completion of a mediation process within 21 days. Should an extension be deemed appropriate, you will be consulted over this.

Parent mediators and members of the conciliation group are agreed by the PTFA, teacher members by the College of Teachers.

You are free to initiate the formal process at any point, if the informal process proves unsatisfactory.

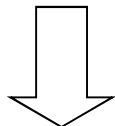


School's Designated Person for Concerns:
 Educational Co-ordinator:
 School's Accountability Team:

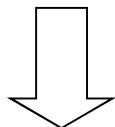
Carrie Smith
 Elisabeth Faulkner
 Co-ordination Group:
 Martin Dathan,
 Paul Georghiadis,
 Jackie Irving
 Gertraud Soukup and the above.

PART 2 If Things Get Problematic - Complaints Procedure

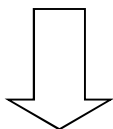
The matter cannot be resolved informally, and you now wish to register a formal complaint



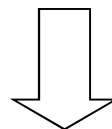
Write to the School's Designated Person. Please use the School's *Complaints Formal Notification Form* wherever possible. The Chair of the Council of Management will be informed on receipt. Your form should be acknowledged within one working day following its safe receipt



DP carries out investigation and arranges investigative meeting with you. Investigation is completed and report is published to those involved, normally within ten working days.



The report and recommendations are satisfactory



The report and recommendations are not satisfactory

You write to the Chair of the Council of Management to call for a Review Hearing Panel to adjudicate on your appeal. Panel formed and Chair of Panel informs you of process. Panel takes place. Final adjudication issued.

Complaints

It is our aim to deal with any issues through our concern procedure. However, if the matter cannot be resolved informally, you should raise it as a formal complaint by putting it in writing. You should also use this procedure immediately if the issue is one of grave seriousness.

The School will do its utmost to manage your complaint within the timescales laid out, however in the interests of accuracy and natural justice, the procedure may take longer. If this happens the DP will contact you in order to discuss an extended timescale.

Complaints will be registered for the purposes of inspection as required by regulations. General information will be provided to school inspectors, however your details will be kept confidentially.

Procedure

1. Please put your complaint in writing addressed to the Designated Person and for the Attention of the Chair of the Council of Management, who will register that a formal complaint has been received. At this stage no Council members will be involved. Please use the Complaints Formal Notification Form, available from the office, where possible. If you need any help setting out your complaint, the DP will assist you.
2. You should receive acknowledgement of a formal complaint within one working day, with the aim of offering an investigative meeting within five working days. During holiday periods we may need to take longer to deal with complaints..
3. The DP will ensure that a full investigation is carried out into the circumstances of your complaint and once satisfied that all relevant facts have been established, you will be informed in writing of the judgement. All parties will receive copies of the relevant documents.
4. This process will normally take no more than ten working days (longer in holiday time)
5. The Council of Management will be informed that there has been a formal complaint, however will take no part in dealing with the matter prior to the panel stage.

Review Panel Hearing

If you do not agree with the report or recommendations of the DP, you can call for a **Review Panel Hearing** by writing directly to the Chair of the Council of Management. The Council of Management will then appoint the panel. Normally this panel will consist of two members of Council who have not been involved in handling the complaint. The third member of the panel would be a suitably qualified person independent of the School's management or governance.

6. Once appointed the Panel Chair will contact you within 48 hours to inform you of the procedure and composition of the panel, including:
 - Date and Time of the Hearing, normally within 14 days
 - Process and Aim of the hearing:
 - a) Members of the panel will make themselves familiar with the procedure and information relevant to the complaint and convene a Panel Hearing as soon as possible.
 - b) Members of the panel will review the complaint confidentially, with objectivity, and without fear or favour

- c) The panel will hear your concerns and may call for the staff members against whom the complaint has been made
 - d) The role of the panel is to verify whether the School has acted appropriately and to judge whether there is a need to change any of its procedures in the light of this complaint
- You have the right to be accompanied to a panel by one other person, who may be a relative, friend or supportive acquaintance. Legal representation will not normally be agreed.
 - If you wish to supply any further information you should do so within one week of the date of the panel hearing. All further information will be made available to all those involved. Any new information supplied at the time of the panel hearing may result in a delay of a final decision or the need to reconvene the meeting at a later date.
 - Following the hearing, the Panel Chair will inform you and the subject of the complaint of their decision in writing, normally within ten working days.
 - The decision of the panel will be final. The School offers no further appeal to the decision of a Review Panel.
7. The same basic procedure applies where the complaint is of a more general nature, eg about some aspect of the operation of the School.

No part of this procedure should be viewed as in the nature of a staff disciplinary or grievance procedure. As employers, the Council of Management acts under rules of confidentiality in such cases.

This procedure may be supplemented where the issue involves allegations of professional misconduct, criminal offences and matters covered by our Child Protection Procedure or others which might result in a member of staff facing disciplinary action. Such cases will instigate an urgent investigation and require confidentiality to ensure due process, legal procedure and natural justice.

Complaints Records

The School keeps the following records of complaints:

1. The complaint will be listed with the date it was first raised as a complaint
2. The nature of the complaint
3. Dates of meetings, communications and those attending them
4. Whether the matter was resolved
5. Copies of all documentation

The complaints records will be kept confidential and secure.

The School will publish the number of complaints dealt with each year, as required by regulation. This record will be made available to school inspectors when they conduct inspections in accordance with the law.

Non Parental / Student Complaints

At the discretion of the Council of Management, this procedure will also be used in an adapted form, as appropriate, for concerns or complaints from neighbours or members of the general public affected by some aspect of the operation of the School.

Other Agencies

OfSTED publishes a booklet online at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Footer/How-to-complain> which explains the process if you decide to take your complaint to the regulator.

For independent Schools, complaints may be sent in writing to:

Independent and Boarding Team
Department for Education
Mowden Hall
Staindrop Road
Darlington
DL3 8BG

Parents may contact Schools Inspection Service if they are not satisfied with the handling of a complaint.

The School Inspection Service
Tolbury House
Bruton
Somerset
BA10 0DG
Company Limited by Guarantee,
Registered in England and Wales No.6981169
Email: enquiries@schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk

Designated Person:

Carrie Smith

Co-ordination Group / School's Accountability Team:

**Martin Dathan,
Gertraud Soukup,
Jackie Irving,
Paul Georghiadis
Carrie Smith
Elisabeth Faulkner**

Chair of Council of Management:

Maarten Ekama

Education Co-ordinator:

Elisabeth Faulkner