



Complaints Policy

This policy includes complaints relating to Early Years provision

Initial steps for raising a concern

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 example:

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

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

Informal stage 2 (for concerns about teaching)

If you have a teaching-related concern and you have tried to resolve this by talking to the teacher concerned but you feel the response you received was inadequate, we encourage you to talk to the teacher's mentor. The teacher, the school office or the Education Lead will be happy to provide you with the mentor's contact details.

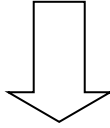
Mediation

If the concern is complex, or cannot be resolved in this way, we may consider offering a mediated meeting.

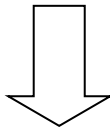
Should your concern or complaint not be resolved via the informal route above, you may wish to raise a formal complaint. A formal complaint may be raised at any stage of the complaints procedure.

PART 2 If Things Get Problematic - Complaints Procedure

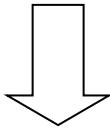
The matter cannot be resolved informally, and you now wish to register a formal complaint



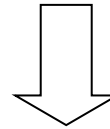
Write to the School's Designated Person to set out your grounds for complaint. Your complaint should be acknowledged in writing or over the phone within three working days following its safe receipt.



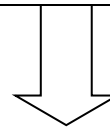
DP carries out investigation. DP consults a Waldorf teacher in cases where Waldorf pedagogical expertise is required. Investigation is completed and report is published to those involved.



The report and recommendations are satisfactory



The report and recommendations are not satisfactory



You write to the Chair of the Council of Management to appeal, giving your grounds and any relevant evidence. Council of management will ask other parties to submit all relevant evidence. The panel considering the appeal will comprise at least one person independent of the running of the school. The panel may wish to hear your grounds in person, normally within 10 working days. Panel reviews the decision and its basis. Final adjudication issued.



Complaints

It is our aim to deal with any issues informally. However, if the matter cannot be resolved informally, you should raise it as a formal complaint by putting it in writing. You should also raise a formal complaint 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 to notify you of the extended timescale.

Complaints will be recorded for the purposes of inspection as required. With this exception, records of complaints will be kept confidentially.

Dignity of staff

Our staff have the right to work in an environment free from harassment, intimidation and victimisation. Whilst parents may feel angry or impassioned about the issues within their complaint, they are asked to raise issues constructively and work with the school to resolve issues where possible.

It is important to note that if you are deeply unhappy about any aspect of school life it may not always be possible to talk to a teacher face to face at short notice. In particular, serious concerns should not be raised with minutes to go before a teacher is about to begin a lesson, as this does not allow for proper consideration of the issues and it is likely to disrupt quality of teaching for the class. School staff may therefore suggest that an appointment is made to discuss issues at an alternative time.

Procedure

1. Please put your complaint in writing, addressed to the Designated Person. If you need any help setting out your complaint, the DP will assist you.
2. You should receive acknowledgement of a formal complaint within three 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 outcome. This process will normally take no more than ten working days (i.e. longer in holiday time).

Appeal hearing

If you do not agree with the report or recommendations of the DP, you can appeal by writing directly to the Chair of the Council of Management, via the school, clearly setting out your grounds and enclosing relevant evidence. The Council of Management will then appoint the panel. Normally this panel will consist of three people, at least one of whom is independent of the running of the school. Once appointed, a member of the appeal panel will contact you without undue delay to confirm receipt of your complaint.

A date and time for an appeal hearing will be scheduled, normally within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Members of the panel will review the complaint confidentially, with objectivity, and without fear or favour. The panel will hear your concerns and may interview the staff members against whom the complaint has been made. The role of the panel is to consider: a) whether the School acted appropriately and reasonably, given the evidence available, b) whether the School acted in line with its procedures, c) whether there is a need to change any of its procedures in the light of this complaint.

You have the right to be accompanied at an appeal 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 before the end of the appeal hearing. 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 appeal panel will inform you and the subject of the complaint of the 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 an appeal Panel.

Complaints records

The School keeps records of complaints including all relevant documentation. The complaints records will be kept confidential and secure. The School will release the number of complaints dealt with each year, as requested by regulation. This record will be made available to school inspectors when they conduct inspections in accordance with the law.

For information, in the academic year 2015-16, the school received 1 formal complaint.

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

1. 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.
2. For independent Schools, boarding-related complaints may be sent in writing to: Independent and Boarding Team, Department for Education, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 8BG.
3. Parents may contact the Schools Inspection Service at any point if they wish:
4. The School Inspection Service
Pembroke House
15 Pembroke Rd
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 3BA

enquiries@schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk

Designated Person:

Lesley Taberer

Co-ordination Group / School's Accountability Team:

**Rebecca Jenkins-Handy
Ruth Beachim-Ratcliffe
Vanessa Mansell
Elaine Sheppard**

**Rosemary Yates
Lesley Taberer
Diana Ball**

Chair of Council of Management:

Maarten Ekama

Education Lead:

Diana Ball

Policy last reviewed August 2016
Lesley Taberer, Bursar
