



Leading Schools
SOUTH WEST

Leading Schools South West

Complaints Policy

July 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 LSSW values the good relations they enjoy with schools and teachers. These good relations are based on mutual respect and a willingness to listen to other points of view. It is very rare that concerns cannot be resolved through informal discussion. When this is not possible, the complaints procedure provides a framework for all concerned to express and resolve concerns.
- 1.2 It is in the best interest of all parties that any concern is expressed and resolved quickly and at the earliest possible stage.
- 1.3 There are specific procedures for certain other complaints which must be followed in those cases - this procedure is intended for those complaints which do not appear to fall into any of the existing categories.

2. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- 2.1 Many enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by the Managing Director or Lead Associate without the need to resort to a formal procedure. We value informal meetings and discussions.
- 2.2 There is no suggested timescale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion although most issues are resolved within 10 working days.
- 2.3 Where these discussions do not resolve the concern, the person may choose to make a complaint.

3. Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

- 3.1 Where informal resolution of concerns has not been successful, the complainant is asked to confirm the complaint in writing to the Managing Director and it is acknowledged in writing. A copy of this Complaint's Policy is attached.
- 3.2 The Managing Director conducts a full investigation into the complaint, including copying any relevant papers to any member/s of staff named in the complaint.
- 3.3 In the event that the Managing Director is the subject of the complaint, this investigation is carried out by another Director.
- 3.4 If the complaint is not resolved by the Managing Director, then the complainant is asked to follow a procedure for mediation, led by a Director who has had no involvement in the case. If the complaint is still not resolved after mediation, then the complainant may choose to move to stage 3.

4. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- 4.1 This can be made only if the complainant has:
 - 4.1.1 sought to resolve the concern through approaches as described in stages 1 and 2
 - 4.1.2 allowed reasonable time for investigation of the concern
 - 4.1.3 accepted any reasonable offer by LSSW to discuss the result of the investigation
 - 4.1.4 taken part in any process of mediation offered by the LSSW
- 4.2 The complainant writes to the LSSW Associate requesting a meeting of the complaints panel. Enclosed with the letter is a copy of the written complaint submitted at the earlier stages, indicating which matters remain unresolved. No new complaints may be included.
- 4.3 The Chair of the Board is responsible for setting up a panel to hear the complaint.
- 4.4 The panel consists of three LSSW Directors who have not previously been involved in dealing with the complaint. The Managing Director is not a member of the panel.
- 4.5 Investigations at this stage are normally completed within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are circumstances that require a longer investigatory period. The complainant is informed in writing should more time be required.

- 4.6 Any documents from either the complainant or the company to be considered by the panel, and the names of any witnesses or friends who might attend must be received by the company's Associate at least seven working days before the meeting. Copies of all papers submitted plus the agenda are distributed at least five working days before the meeting date. Relevant papers are copied to any member/s of staff named in the complaint.
- 4.7 The complainant may bring a friend, interpreter or advocate to the meeting.
- 4.8 If members of staff are asked by the Managing Director to be present at a complaints committee meeting, they have a right to bring a friend or professional representative.
- 4.9 The panel considers the complaint on the basis of the papers they receive and what is said at the meeting. In the event of either party not attending the meeting, the panel has discretion to proceed or to adjourn at any stage.
- 4.10 The committee can:
- 4.10.1 uphold the complaint in full or in part, and make recommendations to the Board of Directors for action
 - **or**
 - 4.10.2 not to uphold the complaint. In such a case, they may still make recommendations for action.
- 4.11 In either case, reasons for decisions are given.
- 4.12 Having come to a decision about the complaint, the committee may additionally refer issues of principle or general practice to another forum, such as the governing body of a participant's school
- 4.13 The company Associate sends the complainant, Managing Director, and Chair of the Board a letter with the outcome of the meeting within seven working days of the meeting.
- 4.14 The Chair of the Board has the right, under this procedure, to have a representative present at all stages of the Board of Directors complaints panel meeting and to have a copy of all associated paperwork.
- 4.15 No further appeal to the Board of Directors is available in the matter of the complaint.

5. Review of Policy

5.1 This policy is reviewed every three years by the company