



Leading Schools South West

Complaints Policy



(This policy supersedes all previous Complaints Policies)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Licensees value the generally 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 and thus to improve provision.
- 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 time-scale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion although it would be expected that most issues would be resolved within 10 working days.
- 2.3 Where a concern is brought to the company's attention it can often be resolved with a single conversation. Sometimes an issue is more complex and will take more than one discussion to resolve.
- 2.4 Occasionally despite the best efforts of all parties these discussions do not resolve the concern, which then may become a complaint.

3. Stage 2 – Managing Director

- 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 will be acknowledged in writing. The Managing Director copies relevant papers to any member/s of staff named in the complaint.
- 3.2 If the complaint is not resolved by the Managing Director, then the complainant is asked to follow a procedure for mediation. This involves referring the complaint to a Director of the Company. The complainant is also given a copy of the full complaints procedure at this point. If the complaint is still not resolved after mediation, then it will move to Stage 3.

4. Stage 3 - Complaint to the Chair of the Board

- 4.1 This can be made only if the complainant has:
 - sought to resolve the concern through approaches to the company as described in stages 1 and 2
 - allowed reasonable time (normally no more than two working weeks) for investigation of the concern
 - accepted any reasonable offer by the company to discuss the result of the investigation
 - taken part in any process of mediation offered by the company
 - put the complaint clearly in writing (normally within two months of the event)
- 4.2 The complainant writes to the company's 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 It is extremely important for the complainant and other representatives to adopt a professional manner throughout the proceedings.
- 4.10 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.

4.11 The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in full or in part, and make recommendations to the Board of Directors for action
- or**
- decide to recommend no action be taken **and** give reasons for the decision

- 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.

4.16 In respect of a grievance arising from a member of staff, this is heard separately.

5. Further Dissatisfaction

5.1 If at the end of the procedure the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcomes where:

- there is undue delay or the Board of Directors did not comply with this complaints procedure when considering the complaint, or
- the Board of Directors is in breach of its License agreement with the DfE, or
- the company has failed to comply with any other legal obligation.

5.2 then the Department for Education who are responsible for NPQ Licenses may be able to offer guidance and advice and can be contacted at:

5.3 4th Floor, Agora Building, Cumberland Place, Nottingham, NG1 6HJ

6. Review of Policy

6.1 This policy is reviewed every three years by the company

