

London Steiner School

Whole School COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

The London Steiner School aims to provide quality teaching and pastoral care to all its pupils. However, if parents do have a concern or a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school with care, and in accordance with the procedure set out below.

LSS makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day. We will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published online, or available from the school office. The number of complaints received and registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year can be obtained at the school office.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you (or your child) raise in good faith.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

Timescales in this procedure will be strictly adhered to during term time. If a complaint is received close to the end of term or during the school holidays, the school will use reasonable endeavours to meet these timescales and will inform parents should any delay be envisaged.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 21 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time, and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 1a – Informal Resolution

Raising an initial Concern

For parents who have any questions or concerns about their child's education, the best starting point is the child's Class Teacher or Kindergarten Teacher. If the concern is about administrative issues parents should contact our office staff.

Members of staff will record the reason for the concern, as well as actions arising.

It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

Stage 1b

Taking the concern further

If parents are not satisfied with their initial response, or if the concern is about a staff-member, parents should contact the complaints officer by email detailing their concern to **complaints@londonsteinerschool.org**

You should also do this if the issue is one of grave seriousness (e.g. where the safety and wellbeing of children is involved)

The complaints officer is responsible for ensuring that concerns raised by parents are brought to a satisfactory and timely conclusion. She may consult the designated trustee.

If the concern is not resolved the matter should be escalated to Stage 2.

If the complaint is against the complaints officer parents should make their complaint directly to the designated trustee.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

We aim to deal with any issues that may arise through our concerns procedure. However, if the concern cannot be resolved on an informal basis, or the concern is about the complaints officer the parent should put this forward in writing as a formal complaint to the designated trustee. Receipt will be acknowledged either verbally or in writing within seven days. The designated trustee will consider the complaint and reply in writing within 21 days.

The designated trustee will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Such records will be viewed by all parties and seen to be accurate.

The designated trustee will call for a full report and for all the relevant documents. The designated trustee may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to, or meet with, the parents to discuss the matter further.

Once the designated trustee is satisfied that, so far as is practical, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The designated trustee will also give reasons for the decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should inform the designated trustee in writing that they wish to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Mediation Group Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to a Facilitator, who has been appointed by the Trustees to call hearings of the Mediation Group.

The Mediation Group will consist of at least three persons (not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint), at least one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. Each Mediation Group member will be appointed by the Council of Trustees. The Facilitator on behalf of the Mediation Group, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 21 days of Stage 3 being invoked.

If the Mediation Group deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 days prior to the hearing.

The parent(s) may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the Mediation Group will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

Where further investigation is required, the Mediation Group will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Mediation Group will reach a decision (and may make recommendations), which it shall complete within 7 days of the hearing. The Mediation Group will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.

The decision of the Mediation Group will be final. The Mediation Group's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the designated trustee, the Chair of Trustees and, where relevant, the person at whom the complaint was directed within 7 days of the decision. The same document will be available from the School Office for inspection by any member of the C o l l e g e o f t e a c h e r s or any Trustee.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue

- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 25(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by SIS under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The Chair of the Trustees is Mr Philip Martyn. Philip can be contacted through the school office or via confidential email address: **philipmartyn@btinternet.com**

RAISING A CONCERN

If you wish to express a concern to a class teacher or member of administrative staff please raise it verbally and discreetly at pick up time or by email to Helen Kinsey: school email address. The relevant staff member will respond or invite you in for a resolution meeting.

To follow up on a concern, you should contact the complaints officer: **Helen Kinsey**

MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE SCHOOL

The trustee responsible for overseeing complaints is **Philip Martyn** (the Designated Trustee). Telephone the school office as above or e-mail him confidentially on (personal school address) He can be contacted at any time regarding a complaint.

SCHOOL INSPECTORS

On request, LSS will provide the School Inspection Service (SIS) or Ofsted, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Both Schools Inspection Service (SIS) the organisation which inspects Steiner Waldorf schools and Ofsted have their own complaints procedure for parents.

Parents may also complain directly to SIS or Ofsted if they wish. You can contact them as follows:

SIS:

Web: www.isi.net

Tel: 020 7600 0100 Email: concerns@isi.net

Ofsted: *School Ref Number: 101073/ DfE number: 208/6344*

Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 123 4666 Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Owner of this policy: Helen Kinsey

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