

## School for Inspiring Talents

<b>Policy Focus</b>	<b>Complaints Procedure</b>
<b>Policy Date &amp; Version</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 v6</b>
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<b>Owner/Lead</b>	<b>Office Manager</b>

### School Aim

Our overall goal is to enable young people to 'be the best they can be' and to reach it we will use concepts and best practice in learning, neuroscience, emotional well-being, child development and coaching.

Our aims are to :

- *Meet the previously unmet needs of young people and enable learning and employment.*
- *Provide positive interventions into barriers to learning and negative family or intergenerational life cycles.*
- *Contribute to community and social change.*
- *Reduce costs to society in terms of both social and economic benefits.*

### Statement of Intent for this Policy

This policy and procedure is for the benefit of students, and parents and carers of students, at School for Inspiring Talents.

This policy and procedure will be relied upon in respect of all complaints by parents, carers and students made against the school except in respect of;

- **Child Protection allegations** - where a separate policy and procedure applies
- **Exclusions** - where a separate policy and procedure applies
- **Appeals** relating to internal assessment decisions for external qualifications - where a separate appeals procedure applies

This policy and procedure is available on request to students, the parents/carers of students of SfIT. While students may, themselves, raise concerns and complaints under this policy and procedure, the school will involve parents should this occur. Copies are available from the Head of School or School Admin.

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## Section 1

## Aims/Objectives of This Policy

The school expects that most concerns can be resolved informally and will use their best endeavours to resolve any complaints that are made informally, or any concerns that are raised, on that basis. If informal procedures fail to resolve the issue, a formal complaint about any matter not involving child protection allegations, internal assessment decisions or a decision to exclude a student, must be given verbally or in writing to the Executive Principal or Head of School and will be dealt with under this Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Every complaint shall receive fair and proper consideration and a timely response. We will do all we can to resolve your concern and to ensure you are happy with the education that your child receives at the school. Parents and carers can be assured that all complaints and expressions of concern, whether raised informally or formally, will be treated seriously and confidentially.

## Section 2

## Statutory/Strategic Basis

Correspondence, statements and records will remain confidential except in so far as is required by paragraph 33 (k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

## Section 3

## Procedures & Protocols: What Does This Mean We Do In Practice?

Our Complaints Procedure will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be impartial
- Be non-adversarial
- Allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- Provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved

## Stage One – Informal Resolution

1. It is expected that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
2. If parents and carers have a complaint they should normally contact the student's Head of School. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' or carers' satisfaction.
3. The Head of School will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. These records will be kept for one (1) year after the student leaves the school.
4. The school will use its reasonable endeavours to resolve any informal complaints within ten (10) working days of them being raised, except where they are raised in holiday times or within two (2) working days of their commencement where the school will use its reasonable endeavours to resolve them as soon as possible after commencement of the new term (usually within ten (10) working days).
5. Should the matter not be resolved at stage one and the parents or carers fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then they will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Two of this Procedure.

## Stage Two – Formal Resolution

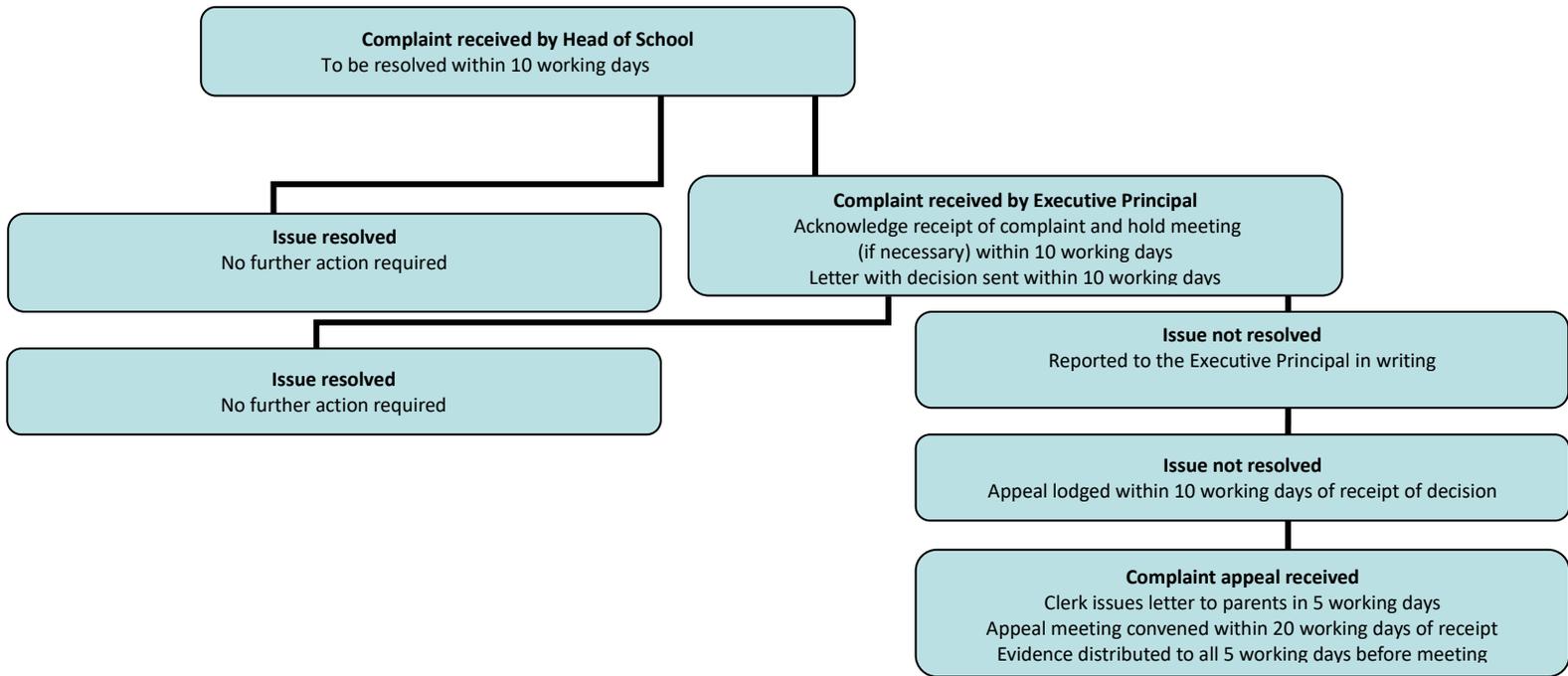
1. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis at stage one, then parents or carers should put their complaint in writing to the Mark Escott - CEO & Executive Principal. They should also identify how they wish their complaint to be resolved. If the complaint is about the CEO & Executive Principal, then the complaint is put in writing to Judith Johnson c/o Board of Directors (BoD).
2. The CEO & Executive Principal will deal with the matter personally. Where the complaint relates to the CEO & Executive Principal then the designated director will take on the responsibility outlined within the policy – all sections referring to the CEO & Executive Principal should be replaced by the designated director.
3. The CEO & Executive Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
4. In most cases, the CEO & Executive Principal will meet or speak with the parents or carers concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
5. The CEO & Executive Principal will use reasonable endeavours to speak to or meet parents/carers and/or staff and other students involved within ten (10) working days of the formal complaint being received, except where the complaint is received in holiday time or within two (2) working days of their commencement where the CEO & Executive Principal will use reasonable endeavours to speak or meet with parents or carers as soon as possible after the commencement of the new term (usually within ten (10) working days).
6. The CEO & Executive Principal will keep a written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
7. Once the CEO & Executive Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. Parents or carers will be informed of this decision in writing, giving reasons for the decision. The written decision should be provided no later than ten (10) working days after speaking or meeting with parents or carers to discuss the matter (pursuant to paragraph 10 above). The Head of School may also arrange to meet with them to explain the decision.
8. The school will keep a written record of all formal complaints, including records of meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, and the school's decision, which record will be kept for one (1) year after the student leaves the school. This record will state if complaints were resolved at the preliminary hearing or if they were taken to appeal.
9. Where parents *and* carers are dissatisfied with the outcome of the school's response to their formal complaint, they have the opportunity to have their complaint considered by an independent Complaints Panel.

## Stage Three – Panel Hearing

1. If parents or carers seek to invoke Stage Three following failure to reach an earlier resolution and where dissatisfied with the CEO & Executive Principal's decision in respect of their formal complaint, they may in writing, addressed to the designated director at the school, request that their complaint be further considered by an independent Complaints Panel set up for this purpose.
2. This request for further assessment of the complaint will, for the purposes of this procedure, be known as an '**appeal**'.
3. Parents or carers must lodge their appeal in writing and within ten (10) working days of the date of the school's decision made in accordance with the Stage Two Procedure. They should provide a list of their complaint(s) made against the school and which they believe to have been resolved unsatisfactorily by the Stage Two Procedure, along with the remedies sought in respect of each. The Complaints Panel is only obliged to consider the complaint(s) lodged in this 'initial submission' although they may use their discretion to consider other relevant and related matters that may subsequently arise.
4. Where an appeal is received by the school, the school will, within five (5) working days, refer the matter to the designated director who will act as Clerk to the Complaints Panel. Where the appeal is received by the school during school holidays, or within two (2) working days of their commencement, the school has five (5) working days upon commencement of the school term to refer the matter to the Board of Directors BoD.
5. Once an appeal has been received by the BoD, he/she will acknowledge the appeal in writing within five (5) working days, and inform the parents or carers of the steps involved in this Complaints Procedure.

6. The BoD will then endeavour to convene an independent Complaints Panel hearing as soon as possible to consider the matter, normally no later than twenty (20) school days after receipt by the school of parents' or carers' written notice that they wish to invoke the Stage Three Procedure, dependent upon the availability of the Panel members.
7. The independent Complaints Panel will consist of Directors on the Board who have not previously been involved in the complaint, and one person independent of the management and running of the school. The process used for selecting an independent person will conform to relevant guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE).
8. The following are entitled to attend a hearing, submit written representations and address the Panel
  - a. The parent/s (or, if aged over 18, the student) and/or one representative;
  - b. The Executive Principal or Head of School of SfIT and/or one representative; and
  - c. Any other interested person whom the Complaints Panel considers to have a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the panel in their decision-making. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
9. Where the Complaints Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. In such cases all parties will be given the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Panel in support of their position, including:
  - a. Documents in support of complaint(s),
  - b. Chronology and key dates relating to complaint(s), and
  - c. Written submission setting out the complaint(s) in more detail.
10. This evidence will be considered by the Panel, along with the initial submission that was lodged by the parents or carers.
11. Evidence will be initially sent to the clerk of the complaints panel, who will then circulate the documentation to all parties, including the Panel members, along with an order of proceedings.
12. It is for the Panel to decide how to conduct the proceedings of the appeal, which should be reasonably informal so that all parties can present their case effectively. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' or carers' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
13. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision, and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within ten (10) working days of the hearing. The decision reached by the Complaints Panel is final. Any decision reached that may have financial implications for the school will need the appropriate approval from the relevant authorities e.g. the Directors.
14. The findings will be sent in writing to the parents or carers and the Directors, the person to whom the complaint relates. The letter will state any reasons for the decision reached and recommendations made by the Complaints Panel.
15. The school will keep a record of all appeals, decisions and recommendations of the Complaints Panel, which record will be kept for one (1) year after the student leaves the school.
16. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

# Summary of dealing with complaints



## Section 4

## Implications for Staff

The staff will take all reasonable steps to identify any complaints issues and report them to the Head of School. If the complaint is about the Head of School the issue should be reported to the CEO & Executive Principal. If the complaint is about the CEO & Executive Principal the issue should be reported to the Board of Directors.

## Section 5

## Implications for Students

The students will take all reasonable steps to identify any complaints issued and report them to a member of staff or their parent/carer.

## Section 6

## Implications for Directors

School for Inspiring Talents has Directors whose legal responsibility it is to make sure that the school has an effective Complaints Procedure in place and monitors that the school complies with it.

The Directors should also ensure that the policy is made available to parents and carers if requested.

They will make sure the policy is reviewed in line with its Review Schedule or as soon as possible after any changes in the most recent advice or guidance.

## Section 7

## Monitoring: Compliance/Consistency/Impact

The Complaints Procedures will be monitored by the CEO & Executive Principal and the Directors as part of the regular cycle of monitoring & reporting.

In the event of a stage 3 Panel Hearing resolution being required, the Board of Directors will investigate compliance with procedures and any lessons learned for the future.

The Complaints Register will be available for inspection – held in the School Office

If you have any trouble using or downloading the complaint form please contact the school's admin team:

[www.admin@sfit.org.uk](mailto:www.admin@sfit.org.uk)

01626 244086

### School for Inspiring Talents Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Head of School	
Your name	
Student's name	
Your relationship to the student	
Your address	
Postcode	
Daytime telephone number	
Evening telephone number	

Please give details of your complaint:

Details of complaint continued

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?  
(Who did you speak to and what was the response?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

**Official use**

Date:

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: