

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH PARENT CONCERNS

POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy is written to ensure there is a full and proper procedure for parents to be able to raise any concern they may have with respect to the Kindergarten.

This Policy is also intended to comply with the requirements laid down in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The relevant publications are listed in the references at the end of this document, and are available to read on request.

This Policy with the relevant contact details is issued to all existing parents and guardians in the Kindergarten Parents Handbook. It is issued to all relevant staff in their Staff Handbooks. A copy is also kept in the Policies Binder in the office, and is available on request to parents.

This organisation is responsible for upholding the ideals of Steiner Waldorf education in our practices and education. However, within this, parents and others are able to raise any concerns they may have. Concerns raised will always be taken seriously and responded to properly. This Policy outlines the procedure that allows concerns to be raised, considered and replied to.

This Policy will be reviewed when any revised guidelines are issued by the regulatory bodies, in the light of other information or experience, and will in any case be reviewed annually.

Please note that all correspondence, statements, and records of complaints are kept confidential.

Parents are able to contact Ofsted Early Years direct at any time and to talk about any concern. Ofsted contact number is 0300 123 1231

RESPONSIBILITY

As proprietors of the kindergarten, it is the Trustees' responsibility to ensure that the procedure is adhered to and that complaints are dealt with fairly and appropriately.

PROCEDURE

1. Informal

1.1 If any parent is concerned about any aspect of their child's kindergarten life, they are asked to raise the matter with us as soon as possible, but no later than three term-time working days after the issue has happened (unless there are unusual or mitigating circumstances) as they should not allow their worries to fester but should act promptly.

Their first action should be to speak to their teacher about their concerns, however trivial. Staff will do their best to solve the problems to the parent's satisfaction.

1.2 However, if the parent or carer feels it is inappropriate to contact the teacher because of the circumstances of the issue, they should contact the School Administrator who will arrange an appointment for them to meet with one of the Trustees within a further three term-time working days.

A brief confidential record of the concern and agreed actions will be kept on file, with a copy given to the parent.

2. Formal complaint in writing

If a conversation does not resolve the matter and parents are still left with a concern, they should make a formal complaint in writing or by email addressed to the School Administrator marked "Urgent – Private and Confidential". This should contain as much detail as possible about the nature of the complaint. The letter will be acknowledged in writing by the end of the next term-time working day. A meeting will then be arranged with either the Teacher or one of the Trustees to investigate the details of the complaint and discuss solutions. This meeting should occur as soon as possible within one week of receipt of the letter.

After the meeting, initial actions should occur, with an agreed timescale of subsequent solutions aimed at resolving the concern. These actions should be taken by the relevant member of staff.

A confidential record of the discussions, meetings, the relevant Early Years Standards concerned if appropriate, and the agreed actions and outcomes are to be kept on file, with a copy given to the parent. This record should list the members of staff involved in discussions and actions.

All such concerns should be resolved as soon as possible and certainly within 28 working days.

A review of the effectiveness of the solutions will be carried out after a suitable time period dependent on the problem to ensure that the problem does not reoccur.

3. Formal Panel Process

3.1 If the person raising the concern is not satisfied with this response, or where the Teacher considers that a more thorough investigation is warranted, then a hearing by a Panel may be requested. The request will be dealt with by the School Administrator who will arrange a meeting of a Concerns Panel.

This Panel will consist of:

- a designated Trustee from the Board of Trustees,
- a member of the Management Committee, and
- an Advisor from the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

3.2 The Panel will appoint one of their members to act as Investigating Officer, whose role will be to meet with relevant parties in order to gather further information about the complaint. Parents may be accompanied at a Panel hearing if they wish. There will be no one on this Panel directly involved in the matter.

The Investigating Officer will aim to complete their work as speedily as possible and certainly within ten term-time working days of being appointed. The evidence will be reported to the other Panel members within a further two term-time working days.

3.3 Within a further three term-time working days the Panel will invite the complainant to meet with them at a mutually convenient time in order to seek resolution of the issue.

3.4 Not more than three term-time working days after consideration of the evidence and any meeting with the complainant, the Panel, via the School Administrator, shall communicate any recommendations to the complainant, Board of Trustees, the School Management Team and, where relevant, the person complained about.

4. Appeal

4.1 Any appeal must be made in writing to the School Administrator within five term-time working days of written communication of the formal panel decision being provided to the complainant. An appeal may only be made if the complainant can show that:

- the Panel failed to apply the Complaints Procedure correctly;
- took account of irrelevant or inaccurate information in reaching their decision;
- or unlawfully discriminated against the complainant during the process.

No new evidence may be introduced at the appeal stage.

4.2 The School Administrator will appoint an Appeal Panel consisting of

- one Trustee member
- one School Management Team member
- an independent member.

No Formal Panel member shall sit on an Appeal Panel in the same case.

4.3 The Appeal Panel will invite the complainant within three term-time working days of being convened to meet with them at a mutually convenient date in order to seek resolution of the issue.

4.4 Not more than three term-time working days after consideration of the evidence and any meeting with the complainant, the Panel, via the School Administrator, shall communicate their decision and any recommendations to the complainant, Board of Trustees, the School Management Team and, where relevant, the person complained about.

5. **Record Keeping and Confidentiality**

All meetings must be minuted and minutes together with written records of the complaint, all relevant correspondence and records of any outcome will be kept in a confidential file in the School Administrator's office (which is off site). The school is obliged, however, to make these records available to school inspectors and the Registration Authority upon request.

We take pride in the close relationship we have between parents, staff and children and always like to assure parents that they will be listened to and that their views will be taken seriously.

The complaints procedure will indicate whether the complaints are resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a Panel Hearing.

REFERENCES:

Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage. March 2017

Reviewed August 2021

To be reviewed August 2022

APPENDIX 1

Name:

Name (member of staff):

Date:

Formal Complaint Notification (Formal stage of Complaint Procedure)

Your contact details:

Please set out the issues of your complaint. Please be as specific as possible, giving dates, sequence of events:

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list it here.

What do you feel needs to be done to resolve this matter?

Signed:

Date:

Please return this form to Régine Charrière or Birgit Moller (Bursar and administrator). We recommend that you keep a copy of this form for your own records.