

STEPHENSON STUDIO SCHOOL



PROCEDURAL STANDARD FOR

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

Reviewed March 2015 by the Headteacher

Next review March 2018 by the Headteacher

STEPHENSON STUDIO SCHOOL

1. Complaints Policy

In pursuit of its aim of achieving continuous improvement in performance, the School wishes to be informed of any area which is causing dissatisfaction to its customers. It will seek to resolve any complaint and to find ways to eliminate areas of dissatisfaction.

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or students, are concerns rather than complaints. We are committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow our formal complaints procedure. For us to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within six months of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of Stephenson Studio School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious or vexatious complaints may incur appropriate action by us. Any complaints concerning the conduct of staff will be handled in accordance with our internal disciplinary procedures; such an investigation will remain confidential.

At each stage in the procedure we aim to keep in mind, ways in which a complaint can be resolved.

2. Complaints Procedure

2.1 Purpose

To describe how the School will respond to a complaint in order to attempt to resolve it to the satisfaction of the complainant and prevent a recurrence.

2.2 Scope

This procedure shall apply to complaints made by any student, parent, employer or member of the community using the School's services or facilities. If a complaint is specifically about some aspect of governance it should be referred directly to the Chair of Trustees. A response to the complaint will be made within five working days of its receipt.

If the complaint is not resolved after all stages of this process have been followed the complainant may write to the Secretary of State. Unresolved complaints will be dealt with within 6 months.

2.3 Responsibilities

2.3.1 The responsibility for implementing this procedure shall lie with the coach or other member of staff involved at the informal stage.

2.3.2 The responsibility for implementing this procedure shall lie with the Deputy Headteacher at formal stage 1 and with the Headteacher at formal stage 2.

2.3.3 The responsibility for implementing this procedure shall lie with the Clerk to Trustees for the formal appeal stage 3.

2.3.4 The Personal Coach shall ensure that learners are made aware of this procedure.

NOTE

Allegations of abuse against a member of the school's staff must be reported to the Headteacher immediately. Allegations of abuse against the Headteacher must be reported to the Chair of Trustees immediately.

In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, complainants should contact the Clerk to Trustees whereby, the Headteacher and Chair of Trustees will be informed of the complaint. The Chair of Trustees will arrange for the matter to be investigated.

Vexatious Complaints

If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the Trustees is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

2.4 Procedure

STAGE 1

2.4.1 ***Informal Complaint***

- a) In the first instance, the member(s) of staff involved should attempt to resolve the problem informally by talking with the complainant.
- b) If the complaint cannot be resolved informally to the satisfaction of the complainant then the formal procedure shall be invoked.

STAGE 2

Formal Complaints Stage 1

- 2.4.2
 - a) The complainant shall contact the Deputy Headteacher who will provide a Complaints Form (COM1) for completion. Alternatively, a letter of complaint will be accepted.
 - b) The Assistant Headteacher will help with the completion of the form if so requested. If the complaint is by letter, this shall be attached to a complaints form for processing.
 - c) Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Deputy Headteacher shall either:
 - i. complete the relevant section of form COM1 within five working days of its receipt
 - ii. attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the

- complainant
- iii. decide that the complaint is of such a serious nature it should be dealt with by the Headteacher
- e) If the complaint is not resolved then Formal Complaints Stage 2 of this procedure shall be invoked.

2.4.3 **Formal Complaints Stage 2**

- a) The Deputy Headteacher shall send written details of the complaint (form COM1) to the Headteacher or to an independent Manager if the complaint involves the conduct of the Headteacher.
- b) The Headteacher shall, upon receipt of the complaint:
 - i. attempt to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the complainant
 - ii. complete the relevant section of form COM1 and return it to the Deputy Headteacher within five working days of its receipt
- c) If the complaint is not resolved at this stage, the complainant has the right of appeal.

STAGE 3 - Appeal

2.4.5 **Panel Hearing Appeal**

- a) If the complainant has been through the stages one and two and they remain dissatisfied, the complainant may appeal in writing to the Chair of Trustees.
- b) When the Chair of Trustees receives a written complaint he/she should first satisfy themselves that all previous stages of the complaints process have been followed. If this is the case the Chair of Trustees will convene within 20 working days a Formal Complaints Panel of three members, none of whom are staff Trustees, and one of whom to be independent of the management and running of the school, to consider the appeal. The Clerk to the Trustees will ensure the 'Complaints Hearing' is conducted in accordance with the guidance below and that the findings of the appeal are sent in writing to the Complainant and Headteacher teacher within 5 working days of the Hearing.
- c) Guidelines for conducting an appeal hearing :
 - a. The members of the Panel should not previously have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
 - b. The Chair of the Panel must not be involved with the management or running of the school (this bars Staff Trustees);
 - c. One member of the panel must be independent of the management and running of the school (not a Trustee or member of the school's staff);
 - d. Parents will be permitted to attend the appeal hearing and be accompanied by a third party.

2.5 Records of Complaints

The Deputy Headteacher shall ensure that records of every formal written complaint are kept for a period of at least three years and are available for inspection at the School Premises.

2.6 Follow-up Review

If the complainant does not write to appeal against the response to the complaint within 4 weeks of receiving a reply, it will be assumed that the complainant is satisfied with the response and the complaint will be considered resolved.

2.7 If you do not feel your complaint has been resolved

If, after following all the steps outlined in this Policy, you are not satisfied with the way in which Stephenson Studio School has dealt with your complaint, you can then complain to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. You should include any relevant documents with your complaint.

COMPLAINTS FORM (COM1)

No

Date of
Issue

Describe the nature of your complaint as fully as possible; include dates and times of all incidents

*If there is insufficient space continue on additional sheets and attach them to this document
Letters of complaint to be attached to this document*

Signature _____ Date _____

To Complainant - send or take this form to:

The Deputy Headteacher,
Stephenson Studio School,
Thornborough Road,
Coalville,
Leicestershire,
LE67 3TN

Name

Address

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Received By _____

Date _____ No of Extra Sheets _____

Formal Complaints Stage 1 response to complainant

Complaint Resolved Yes No

Name _____ Date Received _____
Signature _____ Date _____

Formal Complaints Stage 2 response to complainant

Complaint Resolved Yes No

Name _____ Date Received _____
Signature _____ Date _____

Appeal Panel Hearing response to complainant

Name

Date Received

*Date of
Hearing*

Signature

Chair of Trustees