

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## 1. PURPOSE

OSG UK Lancaster Campus (hereafter ‘the Campus’) is committed to providing the best possible education and support for all its students. This means having a clear, fair, and efficient procedure for dealing with any complaints to or against the Campus, so that any issues that arise can be dealt with as swiftly and effectively as possible.

For the purposes of this policy, a ‘parent’ shall include a guardian, carer or any other person with parental responsibility for a child at the school. This policy applies to complaints from parents of current students and to parents of former students if the complaint was initially raised whilst the student was on the school roll.

This policy is available on the campus website and can be made available on request in a more accessible format as may be required.

If a parent wishes to know the number of formal complaints received in the preceding academic year, this information is available on request from the Head Teacher.

## 2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all trustees, staff, parents and carers or guardians of current registered students.

This document does not apply to complaints about:

- Student admissions
- Student exclusions
- EHC Plans
- Appeals relating to internal assessment decisions for external qualifications
- Disciplinary issues relating to members of staff

## 3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply.

Complaint / Concern	Any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the Campus. The Policy does not distinguish between a concern and a complaint.
Working day	Monday – Friday during term time (the dates of which are available on the campus website)
RTL	Regional Team Leader – The member of the National Leadership with oversight of the governance at a campus

## 4. POLICY STATEMENT

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1. The Campus is committed to maintaining positive relationships with parents and carers and it is important to us that our schools establish and maintain strong home/school partnerships to ensure the best outcomes for the students.
- 4.1.2. However, we recognise that sometimes parents/carers may need to raise issues with us and so we want to ensure that we try to resolve any issues as quickly and sympathetically as possible. We also want to reassure parents and carers that we do take any concerns or complaints very seriously.
- 4.1.3. The complaints procedure is a three-stage process:
- Informal
  - Formal
  - Panel Hearing
- 4.1.4. Complaints received during holiday periods will be dealt with as soon as is practicable but are likely to take longer to resolve due to the unavailability of relevant staff. Under such circumstances the complainant will be notified of any extension to the time scales and the reason(s) why an extension is necessary when the complaint is acknowledged.

## 5. PROCEDURES

### 5.1. INFORMAL STAGE

- 5.1.1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns can be resolved quickly and informally. A parent with cause for concern or complaint should feel free to talk directly to a member of staff, to telephone, or write with the details of the issue that concerns them. In the first instance, it is usually best to address a concern to the class teacher or Form Tutor, as they are often best placed to resolve the matter quickly.
- 5.1.2. The parent may also refer the matter directly to the Head Teacher to deal with their concern. The Head Teacher will aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding.
- 5.1.3. The Campus will acknowledge a written notification of a concern by telephone, email or by letter within two school days (a school day is during school term, when the school is in session) of receipt.
- 5.1.4. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the appropriate member of staff may arrange to speak with the complainant or invite them to a meeting within five school days of acknowledgement. This meeting may prompt further investigation or wider consultation but, in any event, this stage of the complaints process should be completed within 10 school days of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 5.1.5. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 school days of acknowledgement or in the event that the parent and member of staff fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the parent will be advised to proceed with the complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
- 5.1.6. Any agreed points of action resulting from informal discussions or meetings will be confirmed in writing to the parent.

### 5.2. FORMAL STAGE

- 5.2.1. At the formal stage, a complaint must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, the complaint should go to the Chair of Trustees. The parent must state explicitly that they wish to invoke the formal complaints procedure
- The Head Teacher is: Louisa Carter-Davies  
Email: [louisa.carterdavies@focus-school.com](mailto:louisa.carterdavies@focus-school.com)
- The Chair of Trustees is: Eddy Fishwick but responsibility is delegated to Peter Devenish  
Email: [peter.devenish@focus-school.com](mailto:peter.devenish@focus-school.com)
- 5.2.2. The Head Teacher / Chair of Trustees will acknowledge the complaint in writing within two school days.

- 5.2.3. In most cases, the Head Teacher / Chair of Trustees will meet or speak to the parent concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary, however, for an investigation to be conducted. Once the Head Teacher / Chair of Trustees is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parent will be informed of this decision along with the reasons in writing, no later than 15 school days after the formal complaint was acknowledged.
- 5.2.4. Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept. The complainant will be informed if due to exceptional circumstances any additional time is necessary to complete the investigation.
- 5.2.5. If the parent is still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

### 5.3. PANEL HEARING

- 5.3.1. If the parent wishes to proceed to Stage 3 (following a failure to reach a resolution earlier in the complaints process) they should write to:

Terry Arnett (RTL)                      Email Address: Terry.arnett@focus-school.com

- 5.3.2. The RTL is responsible for making the arrangements for a Panel Hearing. In the written request for a Panel Hearing, the parent should state the grounds of the complaint and the outcome desired. They should also send a list of all the documents that they believe to be in the campus' possession that they consider relevant in the matter and that they wish the Panel to see. Copies of all such documents shall be supplied to all parties not later than five school days before the hearing.
- 5.3.3. The RTL will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five school days and will schedule a meeting of the Panel within 10 school days thereafter. The Panel appointed by the Chair of Trustees will consist of at least three people not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the campus. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or relative, but legal representation is not usually appropriate.
- 5.3.4. The Panel will determine the procedure to be followed to ensure that it is best placed to deal with the issues arising from the complaint.
- 5.3.5. The panel will give careful consideration to how the complainant can be made to feel most comfortable presenting to the panel, especially in the case of a young child having to present or explain information.
- 5.3.6. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parent's complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- 5.3.7. After due consideration of the matters discussed at the hearing, the Panel will reach a decision. The panel may:
- dismiss all or part of the complaint
  - uphold all or part of the complaint
  - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
  - evaluate all the evidence available and recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures as a preventative step against similar problems arising in the future.
- 5.3.8. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations shall be confirmed in writing to the parent and, where relevant, to the person complained about within five school days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Head Teacher and the Chair of Trustees.

#### 5.4. VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

5.4.1. Whilst it is hoped that this document will reduce any dissatisfaction with the school, it is acknowledged that there may be rare occasions where a complainant continues to be dissatisfied with the school and the outcomes achieved under the complaints procedure.

5.4.2. Where a complainant attempts to re-open an issue which has already been dealt with under the complaints procedure, the chair of trustees will contact them to inform them that the matter has already been dealt with and that either that stage of the policy has been exhausted or that the complaints procedure has been exhausted and the matter is considered closed. Where further correspondence is received on the same matter, this may be considered vexatious and the school will be under no obligation to respond to that correspondence.

#### 5.5. RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

5.6. A written record will be kept by the Head Teacher of all formal complaints, including any action(s) taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether it is upheld), and of whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or progressed to a panel hearing.

5.7. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except as required by the school by paragraph 33 (k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014; namely, where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them, or where any other legal obligations prevail. Records of individual complaints will be retained at least until the school's next inspection thereafter, in accordance with data protection principles, only for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

5.8. Senior leaders and trustees will maintain oversight of these records in order to determine the appropriate implementation of this policy and to respond to any patterns of complaints which may be apparent.

#### 5.9. REVIEW AND MONITORING OF COMPLAINTS

5.9.1. The Campus will review and evaluate all complaints no matter how far they are taken or what the outcome to ensure that similar problems are avoided in the future or to see if they could have been managed any more effectively. All records of any complaints will be kept confidential but may be inspected where appropriate by the Secretary of State or any inspection body.

### 6. GUIDELINES

- The (Education) Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2014

### 7. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

### 8. ATTACHMENTS

- Formal Complaints Log 2018-19

## Policy Details

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<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Board of Trustees	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	TBC
<b>Policy Author:</b>	Ted Picton	<b>Enquiries Contact:</b>	<b>support@focus-school.com</b>
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## Version Control

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