

## Concerns and Complaints Policy

<b>Written by:</b>	Cathy Day	<b>Date:</b>	May 2014
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Kaycee Fordham	<b>Date:</b>	July 2018
<b>Approved by:</b>	Council of Trustees	<b>Date:</b>	
	College of Management	<b>Date:</b>	

**History of review:** This is the sixth review of the policy now by Kaycee Fordham. Minor changes made in March 2018, following recruitment of School Education Manager.

**Date for next review:** July 2020

### Policy Statement

SDSS endeavours to deal with all concerns and complaints in a professional, respectful and confidential manner. To enable this, the school has appointed a Designated Person (DP) who can be approached directly by members of the community with any concerns or complaints. This role is currently carried by

- Kaycee Fordham ([kaycee.fordham@steiner-south-devon.org](mailto:kaycee.fordham@steiner-south-devon.org))

If you have a concern or complaint about something to do with the life of the school and you feel unable to speak directly to the staff member responsible, or are unsure how to proceed, please contact the school's DP. All concerns and complaints will be heard impartially and held confidentially.

The School will aim to address concerns and complaints in line with its ethos and according to the process set out by the Independent School Standards, Part 7.

### Complaints relating to the EYFS

This Concerns and Complaints Policy and the procedure herein, is relevant to the school's fulfilment of the standards set out by Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. Complainants entering a complaint in relation to this provision, will be notified of the outcome within 28 days of the School receiving the complaint.

Parents / Carers can contact OFSTED in relation to the EYFS as follows:

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

## **Procedure:**

### **Informal Concerns**

- In the spirit of open communication, individuals with a concern relating to the School, its staff and/or pupils, are initially invited to approach the responsible staff member with their concern(s).
- In the event that such communication is not possible, or that such an approach has not provided a satisfactory resolution to date, the concerned party is invited to contact the Concerns and Complaints Designated Person, via the school website, by email or in person.
- The Concerns and Complaints DP will hear the concern(s) and will offer to:
  - arrange for an informal concern meeting with the responsible staff member, or
  - put the concerned party in touch with the school's representative for Parent Liaison, Jeff van Zyl ([jeff.van.zyl@steiner-south-devon.org](mailto:jeff.van.zyl@steiner-south-devon.org)), School Education Manager.
- Following this step, the Concerns and Complaints DP will confirm the status of the concern with the concerned party. If the concern is resolved, the concern will be closed. If the concern remains live, the concerned party may wish to raise a Formal Complaint with the Concerns and Complaints DP.

### **Formal Complaints**

- The concerned party is invited to write to the Concerns and Complaints DP, providing full details of their complaint, using the Formal Complaint Notification Form.
- Receipt of this form should be acknowledged within 48 hours of receipt by the Concerns and Complaints DP, and the complaint will be logged, confidentially and in date order. The Concerns and Complaints DP will notify the Chair of Trustees of the complaint.
- The Concerns and Complaints DP will investigate the complaint from a neutral perspective, without fear or favour. This could involve a Formal Complaint meeting with the concerned party, interviews with appropriate staff members, a review of the specific circumstances around the complaint or any other such activity as deemed necessary by the Concerns and Complaints DP, in accordance with the law. It may sometimes be necessary for the Concerns and Complaints DP to involve other departments such as Personnel and Safeguarding, depending on the nature of the complaint.
- Details of the Formal Complaint will only be shared on a need to know basis and will be stored confidentially.
- Further to the investigation, the Concerns and Complaints DP will write a report, detailing the outcome and findings of the investigation. This report will be shared with three members of the College of Management, for quality monitoring.
- Following this monitoring process, the report will be shared with the complainant and any other parties directly involved in the complaint, within 15 days from the date of receipt of the initial complaint. In the case of complex complaints, the Concerns and Complaints DP may ask the concerned party for more time, in writing.
- Further to issuing the investigation report, the Concerns and Complaints DP will confirm

the status of the complaint with the concerned party.

- If the complaint is resolved, the complaint will be closed and logged as such.
- If the complaint remains live, the concerned party may wish to request a Panel Review (Appeal) Hearing with the Chair of Trustees, Juliet Crittenden ([councilchair@steiner-south-devon.org](mailto:councilchair@steiner-south-devon.org)).
- In the event that no response is provided by the complainant after 60 days, the complaint will be closed.

### **Panel Review (Appeal) Hearings**

- In the event that the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome and recommendations of the investigative report provided by the Concerns and Complaints DP, the complainant is invited to call a Panel Review Hearing by contacting the Chair of Trustees.
- The role of the panel is to verify whether the school has acted appropriately and to judge whether there is a need to change any of its procedures in the light of this complaint. The Chair of Trustees is Juliet Crittenden ([councilchair@steiner-south-devon.org](mailto:councilchair@steiner-south-devon.org))
- The Chair of Trustees has a responsibility to form an appropriate review panel, consisting of two trustees (who have not been involved in handling the complaint) and a third, independent and suitably qualified individual.
- Once appointed, the Panel Chair will contact the complainant to arrange a date / time for the Panel Review Hearing to take place.
- Members of the panel will review the complaint confidentially, with objectivity and without fear or favour.
- The Panel will hear the concerns and may call for the staff members against whom the complaint has been made.
- The complainant has the right to be accompanied to the Panel Review Hearing by one other person, who may be a relative, friend or supportive acquaintance (legal representation will not normally be accepted).
- The complainant should provide the Panel with all relevant information no later than one week prior to the date of the review meeting.
- The Panel members will inform themselves of the details of the complaint.
- Information submitted after this time may result in a delay of a final decision or the need to reconvene the meeting at a later date.
- The decision of the Panel will be final. The school offers no further appeal to the decision of a Review Panel.
- Following the hearing, the Panel Chair will inform the complainant and the subject of the complaint of their decision in writing, normally within 10 working days.

### **Record keeping of Concerns and Complaints**

- Informal concerns are logged for quality monitoring purposes, confidentially and in date order.
- Each Formal Complaint is logged with the date it was first raised as follows:

- Details of the complaint
  - Dates of meetings, communications and those attending them
  - Whether the matter was resolved
  - Copies of all documentation
- The school will publish the number of complaints dealt with each academic year on its website, as required by the Independent School Standards. This record will be made available to school inspectors when they conduct inspections in accordance with the law.

### **Compliance:**

- PART 7 Manner in which complaints are handled - Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014  
[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi\\_20143283\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi_20143283_en.pdf)

### **References:**

- Safeguarding policy
- Staff code of conduct policy
- Ethos and Aims (of South Devon Steiner School)  
<https://www.southdevonsteinerschool.org/ethos-and-aims.html>