

GREENWICH STEINER SCHOOL (GSS) COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

GSS aims to provide quality teaching and pastoral care to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with the following procedure.

Timescales in this procedure will be strictly adhered to during term time. If a complaint is received close to the end of term or during the school holidays, the school will use reasonable endeavours to meet these timescales and will inform parents should any delay be envisaged.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

For parents who have any questions or concerns about their child's education, the best starting point is the child's Class Teacher or Kindergarten Teacher. If parents are not satisfied with their response, or if the concern is about the teacher, parents should contact the *Business Manager* by email or through the school office.

The *Business Manager* is responsible for ensuring that concerns raised by parents in their part of the school are brought to a satisfactory and timely conclusion. *She* will consult the *designated trustee* if she is unable to resolve an issue. Parents may also approach the *designated trustee* if they are not satisfied with the way a concern is being addressed.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the *designated trustee*. Receipt will be acknowledged either verbally or in writing within seven days. The *designated trustee* will consider the complaint and reply in writing within 21 days.

The *designated trustee* will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Such records will be viewed by all parties and seen to be accurate.

Once the *designated trustee* is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The *designated trustee* will also give reasons for the decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should inform the *designated trustee* in writing that they wish to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Mediation Group Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to a Facilitator, who has been appointed by the *Trustees* to call hearings of the Mediation Group.

The Mediation Group will consist of at least three persons (not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint), at least one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. Each Mediation Group member will be appointed by the *Trustee Body*. The Facilitator on behalf of the Mediation Group, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 21 days of Stage 3 being invoked.

If the Mediation Group deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 days prior to the hearing.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the Mediation Group will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

Where further investigation is required, the Mediation Group will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Mediation Group will reach a decision (and may make recommendations), which it shall complete within 7 days of the hearing. The Mediation Group will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Mediation Group will be final. The Mediation Group's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the *designated trustee*, the Chair of Trustees and, where relevant, the person at whom the complaint was directed within 7 days of the decision.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6 (2) (j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

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