

# Inspirational Learning Academies Trust

## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS

Reviewed in December 2016 by Mr A Irving- Director

Next Review Autumn 2017



### Introduction

At The Inspirational Learning Academies Trust, we all work very hard to build positive relationships with parents and try to enter into a partnership to ensure each child reaches their full potential and is well prepared for secondary school life at the end of their primary education. Our aim is to deal with issues and problems before they become a 'complaint'.

However there is a clear protocol to follow if necessary and the steps to follow and their outcome are outlined in this document.

1. If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately. There is no doubt that if a concern is shared with the class teacher they can either reassure worried parents or together devise steps to take to address the concern.

Parents must never worry about sharing their concerns with the class teacher. They will always be taken seriously and due consideration given to a mutually agreeable resolution.

2. We promise we will always be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to deal with them as swiftly as possible. Our focus will always be on the child and what is best for them.

3. Whilst we will take any complaint seriously at any time, we believe that complaints can be dealt with much more effectively if the issue is brought to the attention of the academy staff as soon as possible. We therefore suggest that the complaint should be **within 5 working days of the issue/ incident**. Historic complaints, particularly regarding members of staff/ leaders who are no longer at the academy, may be more difficult to resolve, particularly if a concern was not raised at the time. However any issue, particularly issues

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regarding safeguarding will always be followed up through the complaints process.

### The complaints process

Stage	Process
<p>Stage1. Informal expression of concern made to the Academy.</p>	<p>In the first instance, the matter should be discussed with the child's Class Teacher. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way with apologies where necessary. Members of the school's senior leadership may be involved at this stage.</p>
<p>Stage 2. Discussion with the Key Stage Leader/Assistant Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher.</p>	<p>We expect most complaints to be resolved by this stage. However if the matter has not been resolved and needs further investigation parents must make an appointment with the Key Stage Leader/Assistant Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher. The Key Stage Leader/Assistant Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will need time to fully investigate the matter and will respond within 7 school days.</p>
<p>Stage 3. The Head Teacher. Complaints rarely reach this formal level but should you need to you should make a formal complaint to the Head Teacher.</p>	<p>Complaints at this stage should be written and received within <b>10school days</b> of the Key Stage Leader/Assistant Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher feedback. Your letter should be addressed to the Head Teacher and marked "private and confidential". The letter should say why you remain unhappy and what you wish to see happen. The Head Teacher will let you know when your complaint is to</p>

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	<p>be considered. If a meeting with you and others involved is considered necessary you will be given adequate notice to prepare. You will be informed of the outcome of the Head Teachers' investigation and decision on what further action will be taken within 10 school days. The Head Teacher will make the Chair of Governors aware of the complaint.</p>
<p>Stage 4 Letter to The Governing Body via the Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Head Teacher or if not resolved, within <b>3 months</b> of the Head Teacher response.</p>	<p>If the complaint is not resolved, and all previous stages have been explored, a parent may make representation to the Governing Body. A letter addressed to the Chair of Governors marked "private and confidential" can be left at the school office. If the Governing Body consider from your letter that the complaint warrants further investigation they may ask you to explain your case in person. However, it is also possible that, following investigation, they may make a decision without needing you to appear. A decision will be provided <b>within 10 days</b> where possible. The Governing Body will always consider what actions have already been taken to resolve this complaint, and, unless the matter represents a significant, immediate concern, will consider if the complainant has followed the complaints process.</p>
<p>Stage 5. The Trust Board. You may take your complaint to the Directors of Inspirational learning academies trust <b>within 6</b></p>	<p>If the complaint is not resolved, and all previous stages have been explored, a parent may make representation to the Directors of the Trust. A letter addressed to the Directors of the Trust marked "private and confidential" can be left at the school office. If the Trust consider from your letter that the complaint warrants further</p>

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<p>months of the Head Teachers' response.</p>	<p>investigation they may ask you to explain your case in person before a specially appointed panel. However, it is also possible that, following investigation, they may make a decision without needing you to appear. A decision will be provided <b>within 15 days</b> where possible. The Trustees will always consider what actions have already been taken to resolve this complaint and, unless the matter represents a significant, immediate concern, will consider if the complainant has followed the complaints process.</p>
<p>Stage 6. Further representation.</p>	<p>You may approach the Secretary of State for Education or the *Ombudsman if you are unhappy with the process or outcome. This would normally only be appropriate if you believe that the School, the Trust and the Local Authority have acted illegally or arbitrarily. * Please note the Ombudsman does not investigate internal school leadership and management systems.</p>

**4.** If parents have a complaint about the Head Teacher, they should first make an informal approach to the Chair of Governors (as at stage 4 above) who are obliged to investigate it.

The Trust will do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined above.

**5.** If, despite all stages of this policy being followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied they are not entitled to reopen the same issue. In such cases the Trust Board is able to inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

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6. If an anonymous complaint is received it will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the school might consider it appropriate to contact outside agencies.

### **7. Investigating complaints**

The person investigating the complaint will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if further information is required
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
- Conduct any interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- Complete all necessary notes.

### **8. Resolving complaints**

At each stage in the complaint schools and complainant will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology;
- \*An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- Assurance that the event that was the basis of the complaint will not recur;
- Explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again.  
(Details of any disciplinary procedures that have taken place as a result of the complaint will not be shared.)
- An undertaking to review school policy or procedure in light of the complaint;

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- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld;
- An explanation that, following investigation, the evidence does not substantiate the concern.

*\*An admission that the school could have handled things better is not the same as an admission of negligence*

### **9. Monitoring and review**

The Trust Board will monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Class Teacher will log all complaints and actions taken to solve the complaint in the designated class "Record Over Time" book and all members of the Senior Leadership Team including the Head Teacher will log all stage 2 complaints received by the school, and record actions taken and how they were resolved. These will be reported as part of the Head Teachers half termly meetings with the Trust as necessary.

The Directors of The Inspirational learning academies trust review this policy as necessary.